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# Exceptional Asian Children And Youth

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**Margie K. Kitano and Philip C. Chinn**

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ABSTRACT

Intended as a means of sharing information with educators and other professionals who work with exceptional Asian American children and families, the monograph includes six papers growing out of a symposium and addressing issues related to demographics, characteristics and needs, parents and families, assessment, and curriculum and service delivery models. In the paper "Demographic Characteristics of Exceptional Asian Students," Kenyon S. Chan and Margie K. Kitano emphasize the diverse nature of cultural groups included in the term "Asian and Pacific Americans" and address demographic characteristics of these groups. Philip C. Chinn and Maximino Plata, in "Perspectives and Educational Implications of Southeast Asian Students," provide a comprehensive discussion of the unique problems of Indo-Chinese children. In "Psychoeducational Assessment of Asian Students," Brian Leung discusses issues and makes suggestions regarding the assessment of Asian children and the use of interpreters. Sam Chan, in "Parents of Exceptional Asian Children," relates culture, child rearing practices, and parent perceptions of exceptionality to methods for working with parents and families. Margie K. Kitano, in "Gifted and Talented Asian Students," examines another aspect of exceptionality and provides suggestions for working with gifted Asian and Pacific American children. In "Curriculum Development for Limited-English-Proficient Exceptional Chinese Children," Donna M. Chan addresses the development of curriculum materials for Chinese children, based on their learning and perceptual styles. (CB)

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# PREFACE

Delivery of appropriate services to culturally diverse exceptional students requires knowledge of a variety of distinct cultural groups. Despite the rapid increase in numbers of Asian and Pacific Americans over the last decade, little printed information is available concerning exceptional individuals within these populations. Professionals working with Asian and Pacific American children and families frequently must develop their own materials and have few opportunities to share concerns and ideas. As part of its commitment to exceptional minority students, The Council for Exceptional Children hosted a Symposium on Exceptional Asian Children and Youth on April 12 and 13, 1985, in Anaheim, California. Cooperating agencies included the National Center for Bilingual Education, the Bilingual Training Center at California State University Los Angeles, the Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, the Office of Special Education of the California Department of Education, and the Asian and Pacific Concerns Staff of the United States Department of Education.

Symposium presenters addressed issues related to demographics, characteristics and needs, parents and families, assessment, and curriculum and service delivery models. The Symposium presentations served as a basis for papers included in this monograph. The paper by Kenyon Chan and Margie Kitano emphasizes the diverse nature of cultural groups included in the term "Asian and Pacific Americans" and addresses demographic characteristics of these groups. Philip Chinn and Maximino Plata provide a comprehensive discussion of the unique problems of Indo-Chinese children. Sam Chan's contribution on parents of exceptional Asian children relates culture, children rearing practices, and parent perceptions of exceptionality to methods for working with parents and families. Brian Leung discusses issues and makes suggestions regarding the assessment of Asian children and the use of interpreters. Donna Chan's paper addresses the development of curriculum materials for Chinese children based on their learning and perceptual styles. Margie Kitano's article on gifted Asian children examines another aspect of exceptionality and provides suggestions for working with gifted Asian and Pacific American children.

The intent of this monograph is to share useful information with educators and other professionals who work with exceptional Asian children and youth. We recognize that this work constitutes only a beginning and hope that it will stimulate further discussion and development of additional resources to ensure appropriate services to exceptional Asian children.

Margie Kitano
Philip Chinn

February 1986

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Donna Chan is a special education resource specialist with the Oakland Unified School District in California. She has received a state grant to develop curricula for limited-English-proficient special education Chinese students.

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CHAPTER 1

# DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCEPTIONAL ASIAN STUDENTS

Kenyon S. Chan
Margie K. Kitano

Just over three decades ago, the Supreme Court made its historic ruling in Brown v. the Board of Education (347 U.S.483[1954]) starting a revolution in education that continues to the present day. Since 1954, educators have struggled with the monumental task of educating all of America's children regardless of race, creed, or color. Thirty years of effort and billions of dollars have been expended toward this goal. Despite the tremendous gains which have been accomplished, exceptional Asian children remain vulnerable.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a context for discussing issues relevant to exceptional Asian children by attempting to define the nature of the population and the scope of its problems.

## WHO ARE EXCEPTIONAL ASIAN CHILDREN?

The first task is to describe precisely what is meant by the term Exceptional Asian Child. Child is easily defined for educators as referring to the school-age population. The remaining parts of the term, exceptional and Asian, present more difficulty.

### Asian

Asians constitute a host of individuals from diverse backgrounds. Indeed, there are probably as many within-group differences among the various peoples who comprise the Asian population as there are between-group differences. The term Asians, or more commonly Asian and Pacific Americans (APA's), describes a conglomeration of ethnic groups which originated in the Asian and Pacific Basin. This broad geographic area includes peoples from the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, the Philippines, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and the thousands of islands in the Pacific. The combination of these distant cultural and ethnic groups is artificial and is largely a product of the American political system.

As an example of the diversity within this category of people, consider the definition of Asian and Pacific Americans used by the U.S. Census in 1980.

This definition allowed APA's to identify themselves in any of 10 categories: Chinese, Filipino (usually spelled Pilipino by members of this ethnic group), Asian Indian, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Guamanian, Hawaiian, Samoan, and "other" APA. Historically, it is interesting to note that inclusion of one group or another was not without political pressure.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education, which conducts one of the major educational surveys from which our analysis will draw, uses a definition similar to that employed by the U.S. Census. The OCR defines an APA as "a person having origins in any of the original people of the Far East, Southeast Asia, Pacific Islands, or the Indian subcontinent. This area includes, for example, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Phillippine Islands, and Samoa" (Killialeu & Associates, 1978, p.2). An interesting concept is having "origins in any of the original people" as distinct from someone just born in the region.

Language status is one of the most significant attributes that distinguish the various APA groups. Not only do the ethnic groups in the region speak different languages, but in many cases persons in one ethnic group may speak different languages or dialects as well. Furthermore, some APA groups in the United States largely speak English (e.g., Japanese, 86%), while others are largely Asian language speakers (e.g., Vietnamese, 60%).

This heterogeneity is particularly important in educational planning, since non-English-speaking or limited-English-speaking status may place a child at risk for educational failure (Chan, 1983). Combining APA groups into one aggregate masks potentially vulnerable groups and makes estimating educational progress of APA's in general a rather fruitless activity. Ideally, the analysis and educational planning for each APA group should be conducted individually.

In their analysis of the educational achievement of APA's, Tsang and Wing (1985) have correctly pointed out that APA groups also differ in age distribution. In particular, the Vietnamese are disproportionately young. is estimated that 46.6% of this ethnic group are 19 years old or younger. Thus, considerably more attention to their educational needs may be requ

Chan (1983) and Tsang and Wing (1985) both have noted that while the majority of APA's are foreign-born, this statistic must be viewed with great caution. Indeed, the average Japanese-American is likely to be native-born and speak English as his or her native tongue, while 82% of Korean-Americans and 90% of Vietnamese-Americans are foreign-born and likely to speak heir Asian language at home. Furthermore, wide differences exist within foreign-born groups. Recent immigrants from Korea or the Phillipines have been largely middle-class, professional, urban individuals, while Southeast Asians have been largely refugees from mixed urban/rural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Once again, it is obvious that educational and social planning must proceed cautiously and take into account tremendous variations within the APA population.

In summary, the concept Asian or Asian Pacific American refers to a diverse group of people with origins from a large geographic region. The population is comprised of people from many different ethnic backgrounds who vary within and

across groups in language, education, and social status. Hence, educators must proceed with a sense of caution when speaking of the Asian or Asian Pacific American child.

**Exceptional**

The term exceptional also encompasses a range of characteristics. In the most general sense, exceptional is a euphemism for the term handicapped and describes children who, because of limited cognitive, sensory, physical, and/or health functioning, require special educational services. Exceptional also includes gifted and talented youngsters, who require special education to reach their potential.

Excluding gifted children, categories of exceptional children can be divided into two groups. One group is comprised of individuals with sensory and health-related disabilities, such as the hearing impaired, visually impaired, orthopedically impaired, and chronically ill. The second group of exceptional children, the "learning handicapped," includes the mentally retarded, seriously emotionally disturbed, speech impaired, and children with specific learning disabilities. The learning handicapped are difficult to define and diagnosis, and they comprise nearly 90% of all exceptional children.

Definitions of learning handicapped children are often tied to identification and assessment procedures. Identification of learning handicapped children is so controversial that the Office of Civil Rights refers to this group as judgment categories, or categories in which identification and diagnosis are relatively subjective and not immune to social bias.

Unlike sensory and health-related disabilities category, judgment categories require greater subjective decision making on the part of teachers, school psychologists, administrators, and others involved in identification. It is often found that ethnic minority children, children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and language minority students are overrepresented in these judgment categories.

Of specific concern in this chapter is the problem of assessing and diagnosing learning handicapped children among non-English-speaking and limited-English-proficient students. Dew (1984) and Chan (1983) are among many who have expressed concern that non-English-speaking and limited-English-proficient students may not be adequately assessed and diagnosed. It is likely that these children are initially placed in bilingual education programs rather than assessed for specific learning disabilities or other categories of learning handicaps. Establishment of new training programs for bilingual diagnosticians and special educators may lead to dramatic changes in services to these children in the near future.

Since judgment is a particular element in the diagnosis of learning handicaps, the Office of Civil Rights monitors the ethnic enrollment of children within these categories. Also monitored are enrollments in gifted and talented programs, on the assumption that bias may play a role in excluding minority children from these programs. Because of civil rights concerns, reasonably accurate estimates of Asians can be examined within the judgment category. However, only sketchy data are available on APA's in the sensory and health-related disabilities category.

In summary, the term exceptional refers to a group of children who for various reasons require special educational services or alterations of the regular curriculum in order to realize their potential in school. The categorical definitions are not precise, particularly among the learning handicapped. Estimates of APA children from non-English-speaking and limited-English-speaking backgrounds may be faulty due to the lack of personnel and measures available to adequately assess these children.

## ESTIMATES OF EXCEPTIONAL APA CHILDREN

Estimates of the numbers of exceptional APA students require analyses of selected general population statistics. The 1980 census of the United States population estimated that there are approximately 3.7 million persons identifying themselves as APA's residing in the United States. This figure represents about 2.5% of the population. As can be seen in Table 1, the Chinese represent the largest APA ethnic group, followed by the Filipinos and Japanese. Guamanians and Samoans represent the smallest groups, although it is interesting to note that there are more Samoans in the United States than there are in Samoa.

Income figures presented in this table have produced controversy. The figures suggest that household and family incomes are greater for APA's than for Whites. Some have concluded from these statistics that APA's should be considered a model minority and an example for other minority groups to emulate. These statistical comparisons are somewhat misleading, however. Careful review indicates that the apparently high household and family incomes are not maintained across all ethnic groups. Indeed, the Vietnamese and Samoan groups fall well below the White comparison figures. Further, Chan (1983) has suggested that household and family income levels are misleading statistics to compare the progress of APA's. It is well established that APA households and families have more wage earners in each unit than other households and work many more hours to reach apparent income equity. A far better indication of equity is the per capita income, that is, the average income for each person. Per capita income for APA's in general shows a negative disparity of almost $800 when compared to Whites. Also, many of the individual ethnic groups fall far below the White average.

An examination of the poverty figures at the bottom of Table 1 suggest that APA families are overrepresented among the poor, and in the case of the Vietnamese and Samoans, they are overwhelmingly faced by poverty.

Although 59% of APA'as a total group are foreign-born, the figure varies widely between groups. The low percentage for Hawaiians is expected since Hawaii is the 50th state. Guam and American Samoa are U.S. territories, and their citizens are considered native-born U.S. citizens. Table 2 illustrates the impact of immigration on the demographic characteristics of selected APA groups. Before 1971, fewer than 90,000 Koreans lived in the United States. By 1980, the Korean population in the United States increased by 413%, of which 95% was due to immigration. An influx of over a quarter of a million Koreans, 360,216 Filipino immigrants, and nearly 250,000 Vietnamese refugees has changed the character of the APA population.

## TABLE 1

### Selected 1980 Population Statistics of Asian and Pacific Americans

| Statistic | APA | Chinese | Filipino | Asian Indian | Japanese | Korean | Vietnamese | Guamanian | Hawaiian | Samoan | Other APA | White | Black |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 3,726,440 | 812,178 | 781,894 | 387,223 | 716,331 | 357,393 | 245,025 | 30,695 | 172,346 | 39,520 | 183,835 | 189,035,012 | 26,482,349 |
| Foreign born | 2,182,639 | 514,389 | 505,504 | 272,617 | 203,338 | 292,573 | 221,649 | 2,919 | 2,812 | 14,082 | 152,756 | 9,323,946 | 815,720 |
| Percent | 59 | 63 | 65 | 70 | 28 | 82 | 90 | 10 | 2 | 36 | 83 | 5 | 3 |
| Households | 1,062,945 | 250,585 | 201,398 | 133,585 | 237,635 | 81,031 | 50,471 | 8,205 | 48,367 | 7,830 | 43,838 | 68,991,307 | 8,413,161 |
| Median income | $19,966 | 19,561 | 21,926 | 20,598 | 22,517 | 18,145 | 12,549 | 16,894 | 16,593 | 13,848 | 12,715 | 17,680 | 10,943 |
| Mean income | $23,671 | 23,657 | 25,565 | 25,007 | 25,923 | 22,537 | 15,302 | 19,705 | 19,501 | 16,493 | 17,118 | 21,173 | 14,051 |
| Families | 818,029 | 191,640 | 167,513 | 97,596 | 167,795 | 67,457 | 42,261 | 6,543 | 36,153 | 6,963 | 34,108 | 50,644,862 | 6,105,698 |
| Median income | $22,713 | 22,559 | 23,687 | 24,993 | 27,354 | 20,459 | 12,840 | 18,218 | 19,196 | 14,242 | 13,890 | 20,835 | 12,598 |
| Mean income | $26,439 | 26,600 | 27,194 | 29,591 | 30,527 | 24,670 | 15,271 | 20,959 | 21,495 | 16,968 | 18,251 | 24,166 | 15,826 |
| Per capita income | $7,037 | 7,476 | 6,915 | 8,667 | 9,068 | 5,544 | 3,382 | 5,533 | 5,691 | 3,573 | 4,296 | 7,808 | 4,545 |
| Below poverty level (1979) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Families | 87,339 | 20,160 | 10,425 | 7,188 | 7,103 | 8,805 | 14,934 | 761 | 5,174 | 1,917 | 10,972 | 3,566,679 | 1,615,952 |
| Percent | 10.7 | 10.5 | 6.2 | 7.4 | 4.2 | 13.1 | 35.1 | 11.6 | 14.3 | 27.5 | 32.2 | 7.0 | 26.5 |
| Persons | 475,677 | 106,527 | 54,117 | 37,987 | 45,536 | 41,078 | 85,241 | 4,071 | 26,522 | 11,247 | 63,351 | 17,321,671 | 7,648,604 |
| Percent | 13.1 | 13.5 | 7.1 | 9.9 | 6.5 | 11.7 | 35.5 | 13.9 | 15.8 | 29.5 | 35.5 | 9.4 | 29.9 |
| Percentage of persons below 75% of poverty level | 9.5 | 9.6 | 4.5 | 7.0 | 4.8 | 8.3 | 28.2 | 9.2 | 9.6 | 19.6 | 29.3 | 6.1 | 21.5 |

Source: 1980 Census of Population, Volume 1, Characteristics of Population, Chapter C, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Part 1, United States Summary (PC80-1-C1), Issued December 1983, U.S. Department of Commerce.

TABLE 2

Population Increase Due to Immigration, 1970-1980

| Ethnic Group | Increase | % of Total Population Increase |
|---|---|---|
| Chinese | 250,024 | 67% |
| Filipino | 360,216 | 83% |
| Korean | 271,956 | 95% |
| Japanese | 47,914 | 44% |

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service (1980).

Table 3 presents estimates of the language characteristics of selected APA groups from a survey conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics (1978, 1979). Data in this table suggest that the majority of APA's live in non-English-speaking households. The percentage of limited-English-speaking/non-English-speaking (LES/NES) backgrounds range from approximately 40% for the Japanese-Americans to 90% for the Vietnamese-Americans. This particular survey did not include an additional 250,000 Indochinese refugees who have entered the country since 1975 and who are likely to live in non-English-speaking households.

It should be noted that no data were found on the language status of Pacific Islanders. The migration of Pacific Islanders to the United States mainland is growing rapidly and is likely to include more non-English-speaking and limited-English-speaking children who are vulnerable in our current educational system.

The large number of LES/NES children among the APA school-age population suggests that any estimate of exceptional APA children is likely to be an underestimation of the number of children in need of services.

The development of bilingual personnel and resources will be necessary before LES/NES exceptional children will be adequately identified, assessed, diagnosed, and served.

The best estimates of the number of exceptional APA children is provided by the Office of Civil Rights. Table 4 presents data from their 1978 surveys, including the percentage of ethnic participation in judgment categories.

The data in Table 4 indicate that APA's are underrepresented in all judgment categories and overrepresented in the gifted and bilingual categories. Overrepresentation in bilingual programs is easily explained by the large numbers of LES/NES children in the APA population. The percentages of APA's in the remaining categories are less readily understood. Percentages of APA's in the speech impaired (1.6) and trainable mentally retarded or TMR (1.4) categories most closely approximate the percentage of APA's in the total school enrollment (2.2). Identification of TMR and speech impaired students requires less subjective judgment than for the other categories, due to the severity and/or organicity of problems associated with these conditions.

The proportions of APA's in the educable mentally retarded or EMR (0.5), seriously emotionally disturbed (0.4), and learning disabled categories (1.0) are less than half that which would be expected from the percentages of APA's in the school-age population. Several explanations can be offered for the lower proportion of APA's in these judgment categories. First, it is conceivable that the school-related problems of LES/NES APA children who are handicapped may be misinterpreted as due solely to language differences. As a result, such children may be placed in bilingual programs and not identified as learning disabled, educable mentally retarded, or emotionally disturbed.

Improved diagnoses can be anticipated as the numbers and quality of trained personnel and assessment instruments increase. A second interpretation concerns cultural behavior of APA children. For example, the withdrawn behavior of a seriously disturbed APA child may be attributed by teachers to the child's cultural background rather than to a possible handicap. A third

TABLE 3

Summary of Asian American Population and Language Statistics[1]
(in thousands)

| Item | Asian Ancestry | Specific Group | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Japanese | Chinese | Filipino | Korean | Vietnamese |
| In Asian language households | 1,361 (66)[2] | 245 (40) | 462 (80) | 397 (72) | 134 (77) | 116 (90) |
| Asian usual individual language | 599 (30) | 88 (14) | 242 (42) | 123 (22) | 69 (40) | 77 (60) |
| School-aged persons with non-English backgrounds | 301 | 40 | 81 | 103 | 31 | 46 |

[1] Sources: 1976 Survey of Income and Education. U.S. Bureau of the Census and National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES Bulletins #78B-5 and 79B-12).

[2] Percentages in parentheses.

Note: Details may not add to total shown because of rounding.

**TABLE 4**

**Percentage and Participation Rate of Selected Ethnic Groups and Judgment Categories**

| Ethnic Group | Total | APA | Whites | Blacks | His-panics | American Indian | All Minorities |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % of total enrollment | 100.0 | 2.2 | 68.0 | 20.1 | 9.0 | 0.7 | 32.0 |
| Total enrollment of judgment categories | | | | | | | |
| % of total | 100.0 | 1.1 | 65.0 | 25.0 | 7.9 | 0.8 | 34.0 |
| P. rate* | 74.9 | 35.6 | 72.2 | 94.7 | 61.3 | 83.2 | 80.8 |
| EMR | | | | | | | |
| % of total | 100.0 | 0.5 | 48.5 | 45.3 | 4.8 | .09 | 51.5 |
| P. rate | 14.1 | 3.1 | 10.0 | 31.8 | 7.5 | 17.4 | 22.6 |
| TMR | | | | | | | |
| % of total | 100.9 | 1.4 | 58.8 | 30.6 | 8.5 | 0.7 | 41.2 |
| P. rate | 2.6 | 1.6 | 2.3 | 4.0 | 2.5 | 2.8 | 3.4 |
| Seriously emotionally disturbed | | | | | | | |
| % of total | 100.0 | 0.4 | 63.1 | 28.6 | 7.2 | 0.7 | 36.9 |
| P. rate | 5.2 | 1.0 | 4.9 | 7.5 | 4.2 | 5.1 | 6.0 |
| Specific learning disabled | | | | | | | |
| % of total | 100.0 | 1.0 | 69.8 | 19.8 | 8.5 | 0.9 | 30.2 |
| P. rate | 31.3 | 14.2 | 32.1 | 30.9 | 29.5 | 39.5 | 29.5 |
| Speech impaired | | | | | | | |
| % of total | 100.0 | 1.6 | 7.6 | 18.9 | 7.3 | 0.6 | 28.4 |
| P. rate | 21.7 | 15.7 | 22.9 | 20.5 | 17.6 | 18.4 | 19.3 |
| Gifted/talented | | | | | | | |
| % of total | 100.0 | 4.4 | 78.8 | 11.1 | 5.4 | 0.3 | 21.2 |
| P. rate | 27.6 | 53.5 | 31.9 | 15.2 | 16.6 | 13.3 | 10.2 |
| Bilingual | | | | | | | |
| % of total | 100.0 | 15.0 | 5.8 | 0.9 | 76.6 | 1.6 | 94.2 |

* P. rate = participation rate per 1,000 students

Note: Abstracted from DBS Corporation (1982, March). 1980 Elementary and Secondary Schools Civil Rights Survey: National Survey (p.12). ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 219 477.

explanation derives from parent attitudes. Some APA parents may refuse permission to have their children tested due to perceptions of shame. Moreover, some immigrant parents, unaware of the services available for handicapped children, may keep their children at home.

The overrepresentation of APA's among the gifted is not a negative concern, but does arouse curiosity. The figures may reflect heightened motivation of some APA children, rooted in parental beliefs that education leads to equity. It is unclear whether the high proportion of APA's identified as gifted during the school years is maintained after high school.

The possibility has been raised that APA figures for both the handicapped and gifted reflect reality and require no further explanation. This thesis, simply stated, is that there are fewer handicapped and more gifted APA's as compared to some other ethnic groups. Although this positive theory has affective appeal for the authors of this chapter, it is unsound in terms of the tenants of cultural equality. We believe that all cultural groups possess similar levels of ability but express these abilities in different ways. Whatever the underlying cause, underidentification of handicapped APA's and overidentification of APA's as gifted results in inappropriate services and inaccurate expectations which may hinder efforts to maximize potential.

## CONCLUSIONS

The population called exceptional Asian children consists of diverse ethnic groups whose members differ within and across groups in terms of culture, language, place of birth, age, social class, and educational background, as well as type of exceptionality. As a whole, APA's tend to be underrepresented in judgment categories of exceptionality and overrepresented in the gifted category. Although several explanations for this distribution can be offered, none as yet has been empirically supported. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that increased resources for appropriate identification and diagnoses will better enable exceptional APA's to receive needed services. Understanding the variety of cultural forces and parental attitudes which influence these children's behavior will also improve their educational opportunities. The heterogeneity of exceptional APA's requires that educational services be individually prescribed.

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CHAPTER 2

# PERSPECTIVES AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDENTS

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In 1975, after the fall of South Vietnam, 129,792 refugees from that country entered the United States. In the past 10 years over 750,000 Southeast Asians have found new homes in the United States. The 52,000 Southeast Asian immigrants in 1984 comprised 74% of all refugees entering the United States that year. Of these, 24,927 refugees originated from Vietnam, 19,849 from Cambodia, and 7,224 from Laos (Social Security Administration, 1985). Many of the "boat people" endured incredible hardships, deprived of food, shelter, and education. Some teenage refugee children arriving in this country entered school for the first time in their lives.

In the mid 1970's the majority of the immigrants were Vietnamese. Many of the children were from affluent educated families. Some were bilingual (French and Vietnamese), others even trilingual. In more recent years, however, there has been a greater diversity in the immigrants' backgrounds. These immigrants have brought with them new ways of thinking and new challenges for educators (Social Security Administration, 1985).

In the last decade, Southeast Asians have clearly represented the largest influx of immigrants entering the United States. While Southeast Asians have resettled in every state, some states have absorbed disproportionately large numbers while others have had only minimal numbers entering their region. California, for example, ranked first with 16,718 Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese in 1984, 32.1% of the national total (Social Security Administration, 1985). In contrast, Wyoming had nine Southeast Asian refugees in the same year (see Table 1).

From these statistics, it is obvious that some school districts are faced with large numbers of refugee children from Southeast Asia. Some of these children have endured traumas of near starvation and relocation camps, and have witnessed the killing of parents and other family members. Without question, some children carry with them emotional scarring which could have a profound effect on their behavior. Few data presently are available regarding the special education needs of these children.

**TABLE 1**

Southeast Asian Refugee Arrivals by State of Initial Resettlement
(FY 1984)

| State | Country of Origin | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cambodia | Laos | Vietnam | Total |
| Alabama | 96 | 43 | 145 | 284 |
| Alaska | 0 | 6 | 9 | 15 |
| Arizona | 159 | 40 | 419 | 618 |
| Arkansas | 9 | 54 | 104 | 167 |
| California | 5,202 | 2,211 | 9,305 | 16,718 |
| Colorado | 197 | 153 | 263 | 613 |
| Connecticut | 331 | 73 | 159 | 563 |
| Delaware | 0 | 0 | 15 | 15 |
| District of Columbia | 48 | 36 | 135 | 219 |
| Florida | 335 | 55 | 506 | 896 |
| Georgia | 566 | 100 | 472 | 1,138 |
| Hawaii | 24 | 82 | 185 | 291 |
| Idaho | 60 | 76 | 80 | 216 |
| Illinois | 907 | 273 | 671 | 1,851 |
| Indiana | 60 | 45 | 137 | 242 |
| Iowa | 161 | 190 | 197 | 548 |
| Kansas | 126 | 108 | 449 | 683 |
| Kentucky | 88 | 14 | 76 | 178 |
| Louisiana | 193 | 71 | 675 | 939 |
| Maine | 4,248 | 5 | 40 | 293 |
| Maryland | 444 | 66 | 398 | 908 |
| Massachusetts | 1,371 | 110 | 801 | 2,282 |
| Michigan | 77 | 85 | 299 | 461 |
| Minnesota | 635 | 500 | 498 | 1,633 |
| Mississippi | 0 | 9 | 99 | 108 |
| Missouri | 156 | 85 | 360 | 601 |
| Montana | 0 | 11 | 17 | 28 |
| Nebraska | 25 | 11 | 74 | 110 |
| Nevada | 67 | 24 | 173 | 264 |
| New Hampshire | 81 | 7 | 17 | 105 |
| New Jersey | 95 | 27 | 393 | 515 |
| New Mexico | 82 | 46 | 63 | 191 |
| New York | 843 | 135 | 1,152 | 2,130 |
| North Carolina | 326 | 77 | 143 | 546 |
| North Dakota | 30 | 7 | 30 | 67 |

Continued

**TABLE 1 Continued**

| State | Country of Origin | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cambodia | Laos | Vietnam | Total |
| Ohio | 532 | 90 | 227 | 849 |
| Oklahoma | 160 | 79 | 407 | 646 |
| Oregon | 273 | 215 | 465 | 953 |
| Pennsylvania | 866 | 130 | 660 | 1,656 |
| Rhode Island | 341 | 148 | 42 | 531 |
| South Carolina | 35 | 26 | 49 | 110 |
| South Dakota | 0 | 16 | 21 | 37 |
| Tennessee | 303 | 134 | 124 | 561 |
| Texas | 1,525 | 512 | 2,473 | 4,510 |
| Utah | 455 | 78 | 325 | 858 |
| Vermont | 77 | 14 | 14 | 105 |
| Virginia | 781 | 151 | 632 | 1,564 |
| Washington | 1,405 | 451 | 787 | 2,643 |
| West Virginia | 5 | 2 | 10 | 17 |
| Wisconsin | 49 | 343 | 107 | 499 |
| Wyoming | 0 | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| Guam | 0 | 0 | 16 | 16 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 19,849 | 7,224 | 24,927 | 52,000 |

The remainder of this chapter will describe characteristics of Southeast Asian Children relevant to educational practice. Any attempt to characterize a group of children carries the inherent danger of stereotyping. To suggest that we could, in a short chapter, characterize the behavior of typical Southeast Asian children could be likened to an attempt to characterize all American children. Nevertheless, with this caveat, we can still provide some information useful to educators regarding the language, educational, socio-economic and religious characteristics of this population. By providing examples of some traditional Southeast Asian values and behaviors, we hope to enhance the reader's sensitivity to and understanding of how cultural differences may affect the way children feel, think, and behave.

## LANGUAGE

No single language can be identified with Southeast Asia, since the people of this area come from diverse backgrounds and ethnic groups. For example, the official language of Vietnam (both North and South when they were divided) is Vietnamese, with three different regional dialects. Moreover, many different ethnic and linguistic minority groups reside in Vietnam. One group, the Montagnards, speak 20 languages. Many of the 700,000 or more Chinese in South Vietnam speak Cantonese or other Chinese dialects. City dwellers speak French, English, or both. Through the years, a number of Chinese and French words have been added to the Vietnamese vocabulary. In addition to these language groups, many of South Vietnam's populations are of Cambodian background and speak Khmer.

Cambodia's official language is Khmer, a nontonal language which contains 33 elements in its alphabet. The writing system and the alphabet are Indian in origin. Spoken by five to seven million Khmer in Cambodia, the language actually extends beyond the Cambodian borders into Laos, east central Thailand, and the eastern portions of South Vietnam.

In addition to Khmer, the Pali and Sanskrit languages are used in Cambodia. Their usage, however, is generally limited to religious purposes, specifically Buddhism, and they appear in religious texts and in other activities related to religious scholarships. The Cambodian language tends to lack scientific and modern terms.

Between 1863 and political independence in 1953, French was the official language of Cambodia. Even after independence, French remained the official working language in diplomatic circles, and it is still considered the language of elite and educated members of society. In the 1960's, a campaign to Cambodianize the program of studies in the schools was instituted as an effort to rid the country or at least neutralize the influence and intrusion of foreigners. The effort began in the grade schools, moved to high schools, and eventually into higher education.

The official language of Laos is Lao. Laotians belong to one of two major language groups, the Sino-Tibetan from China and the Mon-Khmer from Southern Asia. Lao is similar to the language spoken in Thailand.

## COMMUNIST INFLUENCE ON EDUCATION

With the occupation of the Communists in Cambodia (Khmer Rouge) in 1975, the educational system suffered extreme setbacks. For the most part, children were denied any form of education. Thus, some refugee children who have entered the United States have come from an educational vacuum. Their academic achievement level and chronological age, therefore, may show little or no correlation.

In Laos, the large majority of the population live in rural areas. Most are poor farmers. Only a fourth of the total population are literate, and many of the rural areas do not have schools. The constant warring factions did little to enhance the educational opportunities of Laotian children.

Educational levels of four Southeast Asian groups are presented in Table 2. The Hmong seem to have the lowest rate of formal education. The Vietnamese have the highest (41%), with a high rate of college education (27.7%) (Tran, 1982).

## FAMILY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Southeast Asian families are generally large, typically having three to seven children (Tran, 1982). Although it is practiced by only a small number of families, polygamy is legal. Thus, families may include a dozen or more children (see Table 3).

The extended family system is stronger than among typical families in the United States (Blakely, 1984). Many Southeast Asian households consist of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins in addition to the basic nuclear family. The extended family is an important concept for educators. Discipline, child-rearing practices, and other types of influences manifested in school behavior may originate from a variety of sources (Oberg, Muret-Wagstaff, Moore, & Cummings, 1983).

Indochinese children learn to pay deference to parents and other elders. Grandparents are accorded considerable respect and prominence in the family setting. In most Southeast Asian homes, it would be considered unthinkable to commit the elderly to nursing homes. Grandparents remain in the family setting and often participate in both babysitting and conducting family chores while the children's parents work. Thus, Indochinese grandparents tend to exert considerably more influence on the development of children than do grandparents in this country (Oberg, Muret-Wagstaff, Moore, & Cummings, 1983).

Southeast Asian families value close friendships. Sharing of money and material possessions with friends and relatives is a common occurrence. Because mutual assistance among relatives is taken for granted, less fortunate members often crowd around more fortunate family members, especially in a new country (Li, 1983). It is not uncommon for refugees, no matter how poor, to save money in order to send as much as $30 to $100 per month to relatives in their native country (Tran, 1982).

**TABLE 2**

Home Country Education of Head of Household
by Ethnicity

| Level of Education | Ethnic Group | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Vietnamese | Laotian | Hmong | Cambodian | Overall |
| No formal | 14.0% | 13.8% | 41.0% | 11.8% | 17.0% |
| Elementary or less | 12.3% | 38.8% | 40.0% | 31.8% | 23.8% |
| Some high school | 33.5% | 31.3% | 18.0% | 52.7% | 33.8% |
| High school graduate | 12.1% | 11.9% | 1.0% | 2.7% | 9.4% |
| Beyond high school | 27.7% | 4.4% | 0.0% | 0.9% | 15.9% |
| Don't know/ no answer | 0.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.3% |
| TOTAL | 430 | 160 | 100 | 110 | 800 |

**TABLE 3**

**Household Size by Ethnicity**

| Household Size | Ethnic Group | | | | Overall |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Vietnamese | Laotian | Hmong | Cambodian | |
| 1 person | 2.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.9% | 1.5% |
| 2-4 persons | 37.4% | 19.4% | 5.0% | 27.3% | 28.4% |
| 5-7 persons | 43.0% | 43.8% | 43.0% | 48.2% | 43.9% |
| More than 7 persons | 17.0% | 36.9% | 52.0% | 23.6% | 26.3% |
| TOTAL | 430 | 160 | 100 | 110 | 800 |
| Mean household size | 5.28 | 6.81 | 8.07 | 5.84 | 6.02 |

## GENDER ROLE

A hierarchy of roles exists in the Southeast Asian family (Blakely, 1984). For example, women in Cambodian society occupy a more dominant position than women in some of the other Asian groups. While fathers tend to prefer male children to help with certain types of family matters, mothers often prefer daughters. However, this belief is not universal among Asian groups.

As in many typical Asian societies, men are considered the principle breadwinners and heads of households. As such, they have ultimate authority over all family members and make all major decisions. A man's authority is typically acknowledged by his children, who accord special respect and deference to his wishes.

However, women may tend to occupy a key position in the household and may have the basic responsibility for overseeing the well-being and prosperity of the family unit. The Cambodian mother, for example, has primary responsibility for conveying basic moral and ethical values to her children. In some areas of family functioning, she holds equal status with her husband, and in other areas she has even greater responsibility. The mother frequently acts as the cornerstone for family initiative and has responsibility for family finances (Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction, 1983).

## CHILD REARING PRACTICES

Child rearing practices in Indochinese families differ from those of American families. Children are regarded as the most treasured possession a person could have and are treated with considerable affection, but are not overindulged (Oberg, et al., 1983). Family concerns take precedence over individual concerns (Li, 1983). Therefore, children are expected to take part in the family household responsibilities and chores. To assist them in this process, parents teach their children by assigning them one simple task at a time (Blakely, 1984).

American families are said to manifest the "Hurried Child" syndrome (Elkind, 1981), in which children are prematurely pushed into adult-like behaviors to make the parents' lives easier. In contrast, Asian children are not rushed into becoming miniature adults. Asian parents may be more prone to "allow" their children their childhood and to enjoy the pleasures of observing their normal childhood development.

Approaches for teaching Asian children are based on common sense and an uncommon degree of sensitivity (Blakely, 1984; Oberg, et al., 1983). In a study of maternal care, Oberg, Muret-Wagstaff, Moore, and Cummings (1983) found that, in comparison to American mothers, Hmong mothers were more attentive, expressive, sensitive, responsive, and patient in protecting their children. Caucasian children were prodded more often toward goal accomplishments, and mothers showed more disappointment when children failed to reach parental expectations. The researchers concluded that because of the sensitivity of the care-giving environment in which Asian children are reared, they are likely to develop a secure attachment to the caregiver, using the caregiver as a base from which to investigate the environment.

Hmong children in comparison to Caucasian children, were reared in a sensitive, secure, people-filled environment where they received a great deal of support and positive reinforcement, including support and reinforcement from extended family members.

## DISCIPLINE

In general, the authority of Asian parents is unqualified and unquestioned by their children. Parents avoid harsh reprimands and physical punishment if possible. However, physical punishment does occur. All adults in an extended family can discipline the children. Children are not allowed to think for themselves. They are told what to do and when to do it (Blakely, 1984).

Discipline may be even stricter for girls than for boys. Girls must maintain a good reputation so that their parents may later arrange a favorable marriage for them. Premarital chastity and proper standards of sexual behavior are extremely important, but they apply mainly to girls. While values and morals vary among regions and especially between cities and rural areas, standards in the rural areas, tend to be more rigid. A family may disown a girl whose behavior is considered immoral (Wisconsin State Department, 1983).

## MARRIAGE AND INTERMARRIAGE

As in the majority American cultures, Southeast Asian boys have considerably more latitude in premarital sexual activities. Among married couples, fidelity is expected more of women than of men. Some Cambodians do not value sex education, because parents tend to feel that knowledge eventually leads to trouble. As a result, information about sex is often picked up from friends, while parents give inaccurate or fragmentary information. Basic facts about sex are usually withheld from girls until the night before their wedding, when the bride's parents and an "achar" (wiseman) provide the necessary information.

In traditional families, marriages are arranged by parents, who consider in their responsibility to arrange for their daughter or son a suitable marriage with advantages which will benefit the entire family.

Western courtship and romantic love have caught on among urban and westernized Cambodians. Nevertheless, courtship is restrained, and physical contact in public is uncommon. Divorce is permitted in Cambodia, but the rate is considerably lower than in the United States.

Intermarriage occurs between Chinese and Cambodians, but it is rare between Cambodians and Vietnamese. Because of the perceived aggressive nature of the Vietnamese, a mutual dislike and distrust exists between this group and the Cambodians (Li, 1983).

## RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

The hardships endured by many Southeast Asian refugees, coupled with their strong religious beliefs and values, have helped develop a docile, sensitive, and responsive behavior repertoire. Cambodians often express their friendly disposition in the form of smiles. They are polite and have a desire to please. This friendly disposition may be observed in situations where smiling is considered inappropriate in this country.

Cambodians respond positively to warm, sympathetic, and sensitive individuals, but tend to resist or even reject authoritarian types of people. As they gain confidence in individuals, their trust also increases (Blakely, 1984). They use all interaction opportunities to make value judgments about people and to determine whether or not to trust them.

Among some groups, only when a relationship is well established and the age of both parties is approximately the same will individuals call each other by their first name. Individuals are never addressed by their last name, since it is considered an insult to do so. Likewise, one who is older is never addressed by name, even the first name. When protocol does not permit use of first name, "big or small brother," "big or small sister," or "Aunt" or "Uncle" are usually appropriate salutations (Wisconsin State Department, 1983).

Entering someone's home requires the removal of shoes (as with the Japanese). Greetings consist of placing the fingers and palms of the hands together near the face as a gesture of respect (Wisconsin State Department, 1983).

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Inherent dangers plague any attempt to describe the general characteristics of a group. To describe the dominant feature of an entire ethnic group leads to stereotypes. Obviously, there are many individuals who will be exceptions to group descriptions. Nevertheless, the following list of some common characteristics of Southeast Asians may help to enhance the awareness and sensitivity of educators dealing with these children.

1. They are sympathetic, gentle, polite, and reluctant to show anger or displeasure in a direct manner (Li, 1983).

2. They are religious and conservative. They believe in fate, and their Buddhist beliefs suppress their aggressiveness.

3. They try to withhold their emotions from others, particularly strangers.

4. They tend to smile, perhaps more than most Americans, as an indication of their politeness and desire to please. Smiles may even be used to conceal discomfort (Li, 1983) and in other ways appear inappropriate by western standards.

5. Being humiliated or made to "lose face," particularly in public, may evoke extreme and long-term bitterness and an unforgiving attitude.

6. Cambodians seldom negotiate. When in a situation where negotiation is called for, they seldom intend to modify their position. Their unwillingness to negotiate in predicated on their belief that the other side is unable to understand the situation. Often problems remain unresolved, with the hope that the other party will eventually "see the light." It is not unusual to find Cambodians settling their differences through litigation. Some will spend excessive amounts on legal fees rather than "lose face" (Wisconsin State Department, 1983).

7. As a group, Cambodians tend to be reserved and are considered shy by western standards. This shyness inhibits spontaneous salutations or expressions of gratitude. However, they tend to be extremely grateful for courtesies and kindness exhibited by others. While their appreciation may not be immediately expressed, gratitude is shown when the appropriate opportunity arises.

8. While appearing to be slow and passive, Cambodians, as a group, are industrious. They are extremely loyal to those who have earned their confidence (Wisconsin State Department, 1983).

9. They value maintaining harmonious relationships, dignity, and self-respect as much as Westerners value achieving results and success.

10. They believe that preservation of human dignity demands self-control.

11. Indochinese women find it difficult to be treated by a male doctor. Therefore, they will tolerate discomforts and rely on "folk" medicine to treat illnesses.

## ADJUSTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

The 1970-1975 war devastated some Southeast Asian countries. For example, there was greater destruction of life and property during that comparatively short period of time in Cambodia than in Vietnam in almost 20 years. The Cambodian social structure was brutally destroyed in a manner seldom equaled in modern history. Most refugees experienced hardships and miseries which few Americans comprehend.

Few Southeast Asian immigrants speak English well. Those who are French-speaking tend to learn English more rapidly, while monolingual Khmer speakers have extreme difficulty. Women and the elderly tend to resist learning the language of the adopted country. The elderly tend to feel that they are too old to learn, while women often perceive little need for linguistic assimilation, since they usually stay home as housewives. Yet, women in some Indochinese groups assimilate more quickly than men, since Asian women may readily adopt individual rights afforded them in America, rights they have never had before (Blakely, 1984). Southeast Asian children acculturate linguistically and socially much more rapidly than their parents and they tend to assimilate as far as the dominant social group will allows.

As a group, Cambodians tend to preserve their cultural heritage to a greater degree than other refugee groups. Older Cambodian family members are conservative and more resistant to change. They have a tendency to live in the

past, while younger family members are prone to live in the future. Ultimately, the value differences between young and old create dissonance and intracultural conflict (Blakely, 1984).

Some Southeast Asian parents experience dissonance due to the acculturation of their children and resultant disrespect shown toward parents. The assimilation process causes resentment in children and parents. Parents feel that they have lost control of their children's behavior. Resentment may be heightened in parents when their own children are asked to become translators, since ability to use the English language is equated with power (Blakely, 1984).

Other adjustment problems are accentuated by a general lack of understanding of the American way of life and by cultural barriers inhibiting development of friendships. Language barriers may preclude certain employment opportunities and reduce economic mobility. At the same time, Indochinese people must contend with prejudices against refugee status.

## EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Students who have well-developed literacy skills in their native language learn English without much difficulty. Among Cambodians, for example, literacy skills can usually be transferred since English and Khmer both operate on the sound-symbol correlation principle, even though the Khmer alphabet differs entirely from the Roman alphabet. Teachers may find that their Southeast Asian students have some problems with the sounds of sh, ch, r, x, l, and j.

Mathematics should pose no great problems for these students, unless the lack of educational opportunities has precluded development of basic skills.

Students will find substantial differences between the classroom atmosphere of their native schools and the schools in America. In Indochina, classrooms are typically large, holding as many as 40 to 50 students. While classes are coeducational, relationships between boys and girls are reserved. The relationship with teachers is also viewed from a different perspective. Teachers are given considerable respect and obedience. Students seldom ask questions and respond only when called on. Only rarely will an Indochinese student challenge a teacher's opinion or remarks (Wisconsin State Department, 1983). Because of the value Southeast Asians attach to self-discipline and respect for elders, teachers in American schools should not find it difficult to motivate these students toward learning or manage disruptive behavior in the classroom. In fact, the largest problem for teachers may be their inability to communicate with these students or obtaining appropriate instructional materials.

Handicapped children may present some challenges to the Indochinese family's value system. The term handicapped is interpreted as "having lost something" and therefore as being inferior to others. Parents need training to understand the services available for these students and the objectives the students are expected to achieve.

## PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

Indochinese parents value education for their children and view it as essential for upward mobility. They perceive school as positive, give it high praise, and generally like what the school offers. Parents believe that school is for learning (Laungpraseut, 1985) and expect all school activities to teach their children essential academic skills. Consequently, they view physical education and field trips as play, and cutting and pasting paper activities as common sense skills.

There are indications that some Indochinese groups have more contact with schools and/or teachers than others. For example, Blakely (1982) found that the Vietnamese have about twice as much contact with schools/teachers than their Laotian/Cambodian counterparts. Also, parents of elementary school children receive more letters and memos from schools than parents of secondary school students. Parents of elementary school children respond more often, especially if the memos and letters require a signature. Parents like to see homework assigned to their children, but they begin to loose track of homework completion about the time the students reach adolescence (junior high). Children's views of school, teachers, and educational activities typically mirror their parent's attitudes. Children report that they like math, teachers, classmates, reading/writing, and physical education, in that order.

Parent-teacher relationships are complicated by the language barrier and lack of parental familiarity with the American school system. In addition, parents tend to place the entire responsibility for their child's education on the school and teacher. They are not accustomed to participating in decisions regarding their children's education, since decision-making in their native country is typically a unilateral responsibility of the school.

Many Cambodians consider physical punishment an acceptable practice, and teachers may be shocked at what they consider child abuse. Americans might find the high level of parental authority difficult to comprehend. While teachers should not allow cultural differences to keep them from addressing the issue of child abuse, trained social workers familiar with the cultural needs of the group should be employed to minimize school/parent conflict and parental "loss of face."

Schools may find it helpful to use the assistance of bilingual individuals, particularly those who are well known and respected in the Southeast Asian community. Using these individuals as translators and liaisons may minimize communication problems between parents and school.

If parent conferences are held, consideration should be given to the setting. Conferring with parents at home is better than conferring at school. Topics of the conference should not include academics as an issue, since all educational matters are relegated to the school and the teacher. If interpreters are used, they should be technically trained. In addition, selection criteria for interpreters should include knowledge of the curriculum academic expectations rather than "just speaking the language." Interpreters unfamiliar with school expectations may encourage parents to accept something that the interpreter thinks will satisfy the teacher (Blakely, 1984).

## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

Reported occupations of Cambodians, Laotians, and Hmong are typically limited to six categories, including clerical worker, crafts operative, transportation worker, laborer, and service worker. Vietnamese seem to possess a wider variety of skills and find employment in a wider range of occupations (see Table 4).

Of Indochinese refugees presently living in the United States, 45% hold blue collar jobs as compare to 33% of the general population. Twice as many refugees are employed in labor positions as are members of the general population. While 57% of youth between 16 and 24 years of age in the general population report employment, only 37% of refugee youth have jobs.

Approximately 12% of the refugees report that they worked in private household positions which typically pay low salaries and provide no benefits or security. Only 1% of the general population report employment in household positions. Refugee employment closely parallels figures for Black and other ethnic minority youth groups in America.

The average annual income of Indochinese refugee families is very low compared to the general population. For example, the National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity indicated in August, 1982 that 14% of average American families of four had an income below the poverty line. In comparison, 65% of the Vietnamese, 76% of the Laotians, 80% of the Hmong, and 82% of the Cambodians living in the United States were reported as having income below the poverty line (see Table 5).

## SUMMARY

Educators are held in high esteem by most Southeast Asians students and their parents. In Cambodia, Buddhist monks providing instruction have traditionally demanded obedience, respect, and appreciation. These attitudes may be carried over toward American teachers. Teachers can help the adjustment of these students by recognizing that the pluralistic nature of this country has been one of the cornerstones of its greatness. Southeast Asian students, like their European counterparts, have much to contribute to the culture of this country. While learning a new language and new customs, they should be encouraged to maintain their cultural heritage with pride. Inevitably cultural conflicts will arise when new American ways come up against traditional family values. However, patience, communication, and mutual respect can often help resolve many of these conflicts and minimize trauma.

Teachers should exercise caution by not overreacting to different behaviors on the part of Southeast Asian students or their parents. Behavior differences may be a function of cultural differences, or in some instances they may be a function of the traumatic experiences these individuals endured prior to arriving in this country. While being careful not to stereotype Southeast Asian students, educators can best meet the needs of these students by being sensitive to their individual needs and differences.

**TABLE 4**

Current Occupation of Head of Household by Ethnicity

| Occupation | Ethnic Group | | | | Overall |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Vietnamese | Laotian | Hmong | Cambodian | |
| Self-employed | 0.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.3% |
| Professional | 21.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 12.9% |
| Managerial | 1.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.0% |
| Merchant | 1.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| Sales | 2.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.3% |
| Clerical | 6.5% | 1.8% | 9.5% | 4.8% | 5.9% |
| Crafts | 21.2% | 21.4% | 19.0% | 9.5% | 20.1% |
| Operatives | 22.3% | 51.8% | 23.8% | 52.4% | 30.0% |
| Transportation | 3.3% | 1.8% | 0.0% | 4.8% | 2.6% |
| Laborer | 4.3% | 7.1% | 2.4% | 0.0% | 4.3% |
| Public & Private Service Work | 8.2% | 14.3% | 38.1% | 28.6% | 14.9% |
| Service Work | 7.1% | 1.8% | 7.1% | 0.0% | 5.6% |
| Other | 0.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.3% |
| Total Applicable | 185 | 56 | 42 | 21 | 304 |
| Inapplicable (Unemployed) | 245 | 104 | 58 | 89 | 496 |
| TOTAL | 430 | 160 | 100 | 110 | 800 |

**TABLE 5**

Monthly Household Income by Ethnicity

| Income | Ethnic Group | | | | Overall |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Vietnamese | Laotian | Hmong | Cambodian | |
| $0-$700 | 21.9% | 20.0% | 17.0% | 29.1% | 21.9% |
| $700-$1,000 | 29.5% | 34.4% | 34.0% | 34.5% | 31.8% |
| $1,000-$1,300 | 14.4% | 21.9% | 28.0% | 18.2% | 18.1% |
| $1,300-$1,600 | 11.4% | 12.5% | 15.0% | 8.2% | 11.6% |
| $1,600-$1,900 | 6.0% | 8.8% | 3.0% | 7.3% | 6.4% |
| $1,900 + | 14.1% | 1.9% | 3.0% | 2.7% | 8.8% |

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CHAPTER 3

# PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF ASIAN STUDENTS

Brian Leung

Psychoeducational assessment of Asian students is one of the most problematic issues facing educators involved with these students. The parameters of psychoeducational assessment are broad and include assessment areas such as cognitive, perceptual, academic, and social-emotional. A persistent issue which plagues diagnosticians, psychometrists, and psychologists involves determining what tests and testing procedures will assure nonbiased assessment for Asian children.

Assessment data are used in major decisions regarding the placement of and programming for children. For this reason, appropriate assessment practices are essential in providing for the educational needs of exceptional Asian children. This chapter focuses on major considerations in (a) the treatment of cultural factors by the assessor and (b) general assessment procedures with Asian students.

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY

In the assessment of an Asian child, one of the first issues facing an assessor is the specific cultural background of the child. The first chapter in this volume raised the question of what is meant by "Asian." Asians can represent a number of culturally diverse groups including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Filipinos, and Samoans, among others. Furthermore, this diversity does not stop at between-group differences, but extends into within-group differences as well. For example, there is considerable diversity between Chinese from Mainland China and those from Hong Kong; those born in the United States and the recent immigrants; and those who subscribe to more "traditional" versus more "Westernized" values. Since cultural information is invaluable in assisting an assessor to correctly interpret overt and/or covert behaviors of Asian parents and children, both the between- and within-group differences need to be carefully examined because these differences will often be manifested in very different culture-related behavior patterns (i.e., lifestyles, family roles and responsibilities, life goals and aspirations, history and traditions). An individual's specific cultural patterns will affect how behaviors and testing data should be interpreted and used in decision making.

Specifically, the types of Asian cultural information that are useful to an assessor might include the following:

1. Perception of the child/individual
2. Child rearing practices
3. Behavior management
4. Communication styles
5. Views of handicapping conditions
6. Coping strategies
7. Expectations

(Chan, 1983)

While this is only a partial list of topics, the diversity of Asian groups makes the understanding of these few topics a complex task. In examining cultural factors during the assessment of an Asian child, the following general recommendations may be helpful:

1. Be cognizant of the diversity among Asian populations. Between- and within-group differences can be considerable. Strive to increase your knowledge base about the various cultures and differences whenever possible. (For a suggested "checklist" on culture, see Saville-Troike, 1978.)

2. Be aware that you may not recognize your knowledge gaps. Every culture has evolved certain sets of behaviors that are adaptive to the demands of the culture. When we are unfamiliar with a culture, we may not be aware of the kind of behaviors that are required in a particular setting. Therefore, it is possible that a particular Asian group may present such a dramatically different lifestyle from your own mainstream lifestyle that you may not think of exploring certain types of behaviors.

3. Because many culture-specific behaviors are difficult to interpret, it is always important to (a) avoid quick conclusions/inferences and (b) cross-validate with different people at different settings.

4. Have confidence in your clinical skills. Despite the influence of cultural background on overt and covert behavior patterns, it is important to remember that as an assessor your primary responsibility is to diagnose a clinical problem, not a cultural group. How culture will actually affect behavior is sometimes unclear. It is conceivable that for every 100 people who belong to a group subscribing to a particular cultural behavior, 10 people will not practice it, 5 will act in an opposite manner, and 2 will have never heard of it. Therefore, do not minimize your "clinical memory." Make informed clinical judgments when necessary.

## ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

In examining assessment procedures with Asian students, five major topics merit discussion: assessor competence, purpose of assessment, assessment tools, use of interpreters, and student interactions.

### Assessor Competence

The most critical variable in conducting an appropriate assessment is the competence of the assessor. In determining the competence of an assessor, his or her cultural membership and bilingual language skills are not always the most important criteria. A competent assessor not only possesses the necessary skills, knowledge, and experiences, but also displays sensitivity and openness when working with an Asian child. These criteria apply to Asian as well as non-Asian assessors.

In terms of sensitivity, questions that an assessor might explore include the following:

> "How do I feel about this Asian child?"
> "Will my attitude unfairly affect this student's performance?"
> "Can I evaluate this child fairly without prejudice or preconceived notions, positive or negative? If not, would I refer the child to someone else?"
> (Expanded from material developed by The Illinois Resource Center)

Openness includes the willingness to acknowledge one's own limitations. Nonbiased assessment of language minority students is difficult to conduct, even for highly trained and motivated professionals. There will be times when, as the "expert," we do not have all the answers because we simply do not have enough information, and we need others to assist with the assessment. Reliance on others may involve losing some professional "control," but the benefit of the multidisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary team approach to assessment can be beneficial when working with an Asian student. One particularly exciting aspect of the team approach with language minority students involves the interfacing of bilingual and special education services for these students. The need to integrate these services is something that many state, county, and local school districts are beginning to address.

### Purpose of Assessment

An appropriate, nonbiased assessment requires a clearly defined purpose. The purpose should reflect the specific information required to enable the professional staff and parents to make valid decisions regarding placement and programming. Identifying the particular skill to be assessed will help determine the particular techniques and/or assessment tools to be employed. This procedure may minimize the tendency to simply administer a "standard" battery of tests which may or may not be appropriate to the needs of the students.

**Assessment Tools**

Perhaps no other topic in assessment generates more interest, anxiety, guilt, and disagreement than that of test selection. Given the state of the art of test development, the attempt to select a perfect test for limited-English-proficient (LEP) Asian students may be a futile effort. There are no available instruments that are totally appropriate for the Asian LEP student if they are administered with standardized procedures. A primary problem is that in most instances appropriate representation of Asian children has not been included in the standardization samples or norming procedures for the tests.

Few psychoeducational tests include Asian children in the norming sample. Of those that do (e.g., K-ABC), it is unclear which Asian groups were included. Given the cultural diversity of the many Asian groups, it appears unrealistic to expect test publishers to include a totally representative sample of Asian children. Finally, even though the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R) has been translated and normed in both Hong Kong and Taiwan, the utility of the translations is limited because they are applicable only to recent Hong Kong and/or Taiwan immigrant students. These tests also require a level of Chinese proficiency that few assessors possess.

We cannot ignore or totally eliminate the use of standardized psychometric tests--they have value in the assessment process. However, when using these tests, assessors should (a) understand the limitations of tests in general--they are at best a "snapshot" of the functional levels of the student; (b) know the technical limitations of commonly used tests (see Watson, Grouell, Heller, & Omark, 1980 test adequacy checklist) and gauge use of the results accordingly; (c) select measures with the student and the purpose of the testing in mind (i.e., based on the kinds of information needed); and (d) administer the instruments in a clinical, nonstandardized manner (e.g., use the technique of test-teach-test; avoid applying inappropriate norms).

Since tests alone do not provide all the information needed, we must have alternative sources of data to confirm and cross-validate our data. Three primary sources of additional information are:

1. Written records. Asian students who have been attending school in this country will have cumulative records containing many types of background information (e.g., what happened to that child before he or she came to you, and more specifically, whether or not the student had an adequate opportunity to learn, both in the United States and/or the student's native country). In Asian countries where there is a well developed educational system (e.g., Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea) it will be possible to request written records much as you would from a neighboring school district.

2. Observations. It would be desirable to conduct observations in both school and home settings, perhaps with the assistance of other members of the assessment team. It is not within the scope of this chapter to discuss the specifics on observations of Asian students, but in conducting observations, culture and culture-specific behaviors should be kept in mind.

3. Interviews. It is important to work and talk with specific school personnel who have had contacts with the child, as well as the parent/primary caretaker. The latter can provide valuable information about the student's behaviors outside the structured school setting and home environment. General guidelines for interviewing an Asian parent include the following:

   - o Give the parents the option of being interviewed at home or at school.
   - o Offer to bring an interpreter if unsure about the primary language.
   - o Accept hospitality; it conveys acceptance of the family.
   - o Spend time to build rapport, because interviews are not common practice for many Asian parents.
   - o State your purpose clearly and often, so that there will be no misunderstandings about your visit.
   - o Always be positive with comments and questions.
   - o Be aware that nonverbal cues may be more important than verbal cues, especially if the parents are unfamiliar with English. Sincere or condescending attitudes will be communicated.
   - o When in doubt, adjust your communication style/body language to that of the parents.
   - o Be sure to follow up the visit with updates of information and decisions.
   - o Most important, be patient. There are many potential barriers to cross-cultural communication. You may be the link to this massive and confusing society of many of these Asian parents.
   (Expanded from material developed by Dr. Sam Chan)

**Interpreter/Translator**

Throughout the entire assessment process, unless the parent and student are fluent English speakers and/or the assessor is fluent in their primary language, an interpreter/translator (I/T) will be needed. The following three general issues arise concerning the use of I/T's:

1. Seating arrangement. Whether the meeting is an assessment or conferencing session, it is most important that the physical arrangement be set up such that (a) a "They versus You" arrangement is avoided and (b) you remain in a position where you can observe and maintain control of the entire process without being left out.

2. Steps or phases. Much of the current training material on I/T's focuses on different "phases" of this process:
   (a) Preparation Phase. The assessor prepares the I/T by explaining the purpose, general procedures, test materials, and terms to be used for the upcoming session. Issues such as confidentiality, acting professionally, and not giving excessive cues may need to be addressed directly.
   (b) Interaction Phase. Observe the interaction between the I/T and the student and note any unusual mannerisms and/or facial or bodily expressions.
   (c) Debriefing Phase. Review the just-completed interaction and clarify any observations noted. Ask the I/T for feedback about the session.

3. Difficulty of the interpretation/translation task. Effective interpreting/translating requires a number of skills, including auditory memory, sequencing, fluency, and paraphrasing. Assessors need to give I/T's adequate time to prepare and they can facilitate the process by using short sentences, giving examples, and providing encouragement. Ideally, only credentialed and experienced bilingual professionals should be used as I/T's. If such people are not available, then each I/T selected should be carefully chosen and properly trained.

**Student Interaction**

Although there are tremendous differences among Asian students, there are two common tendencies that may be useful for assessors to consider as they interact with an Asian student. These tendencies derive from the typical Asian student's perception of adults as authority figures.

1. During a one-to-one testing session, an Asian student will tend to be much more tense and stressed than his or her Anglo counterpart. The stress results from several factors:

   (a) Due to limited resources in most Asian countries, testing has always been used to screen out students, rather than to determine eligibility for entering a program.
   (b) The sometimes excessively high achievement motivation of Asian students can create tremendous internal pressure.
   (c) One-to-one interaction with the teacher is not a common practice except for disciplinary purposes.

   For these reasons, the Asian student may also be unwilling to guess during a testing session. Asian students often consider guessing, or the idea of taking a chance, to be inappropriate, especially in front of a teacher. The testing session thus creates anxiety for many Asian students until they become more familiar with the demands and expectations of the American educational institution.

2. Since speed and accuracy are both reinforced in most Asian countries, Asian students tend to strive for both. It is not uncommon for many students to sacrifice accuracy for speed. The assessor should remind the student frequently that accuracy is as important as speed, if not more so.

These behaviors are not intended to describe all Asian students, but represent two examples of how a relatively common experience within American schools can be viewed by an Asian student.

## CONCLUSION

The psychoeducational assessment of Asian students constitutes a difficult task, especially in the absence of appropriate instruments and personnel. Nevertheless, the need for providing services to this population requires that the assessment process continue. Assessment personnel can improve the process for Asian students by:

a. having a knowledge of cultural factors;
b. becoming aware of one's strengths and limitations and those of available instruments;
c. being open to team decision making;
d. establishing a clear purpose for assessment;
e. employing multiple sources of information; and
f. effectively using the skills of interpreters or translators.

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CHAPTER 4

# PARENTS OF EXCEPTIONAL ASIAN CHILDREN

Sam Chan

Within the next 15 years, the Asian population in the United States will approximately double to reach between 10.5 and 11.5 million--thus representing the highest percentage growth of any major ethnic group in the United States (Levy, 1982). Millions of new immigrants will have contributed to this dramatically accelerated population growth. Demographic trends indicate that recent Asian immigrants have been and will continue to be characterized by predominantly non-English-speaking families with young children, including significant numbers of children with exceptional needs.

The identification of increasing numbers of special needs Asian immigrant children in numerous communities has prompted public agencies to address corresponding critical needs and service delivery issues--particularly the continued underrepresentation of Asian students and clients within an array of educational, developmental, and family support services programs (K. Chan, 1981). For example, within the public schools, there is evidence to indicate that significant numbers of non- or limited-English-speaking Asian children with various handicapping conditions are either not participating or may be misplaced in special education programs as a result of underidentification and misdiagnosis (K. Chan, 1983). Furthermore, the parents of such children face persistent multiple barriers which inhibit their access to needed services and information. Such barriers include lack of language-appropriate parent education materials and information concerning resources, rights, and responsibilities; lack of qualified bilingual, bicultural personnel; lack of culturally responsive service models; and inadequate or inappropriate outreach methods employed by provider agencies.

Throughout efforts to enhance resources, Asian children with developmental special needs must be viewed within an historical and ecological context of familial, cultural, and community systems. This chapter will thus focus on selected historical experiences and specific cultural/linguistic factors related to parents of exceptional Asian children. Among such factors are child-rearing values and family socialization practices, traditional attitudes and coping styles in relation to children with handicapping conditions, and cultural orientations and behaviors affecting service utilization. A model of comprehensive parent education and training for non-English-speaking Asian parents of developmentally disabled children will also be reviewed.

## HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES

The Asian population of this nation is an extremely heterogeneous multigenerational grouping of approximately 29 distinct ethnic groups with diverse national origins and histories of experience in the United States. Asian immigrants, however, have historically shared a common position as a minority subordinated on the basis of race and culture (Kitano & Matsushima, 1981). "Denied the rights of citizenship, denied ownership of land, assaulted, murdered, and placed in concentration camps during World War II, Asians in America have at one time or another been subjected to the most appalling forms of discrimination ever perpetrated against any immigrant group" (Sue, 1981, p. 115). While "legal" discrimination has served as the primary tool used to subordinate Asians, the fact that Asians are physiologically visible and obviously different from mainstream Americans has also contributed to their victimization.

Stereotypic, undifferentiated, and hostile perceptions of Asian immigrants have persisted alarmingly to the present time. Within the past few years, increasing acts of domestic racial violence (including several beatings and murders) and a resurgence of scapegoating, stereotyping, and anti-Asian activities have been documented throughout the country (APAAC, 1985). Asian Americans are experiencing a "backlash" phenomenon wherein "new yellow peril" sentiment is fueled by the perceived threat of Asian immigrants to jobs, businesses, and community lifestyles (Smollar, 1983).

Among the most vulnerable and visible targets of such backlash is the Indochinese refugee population, which has grown to over 700,000 since 1975. The American assimilation of refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia is part of a continuing ordeal stemming from the traumatic experiences of decades of war; personal, economic, and social losses; the uncertainties and dangers of flight; and months (even years) of detention in refugee camps (Moon & Tashima, 1982). Refugee resettlement strategies have entailed the widespread dispersal of thousands of individuals and families across the country in order to "facilitate assimilation." Survival and adjustment to radical environmental transitions have thus included the struggle against disintegration of family, community, and cultural ties (King & Holley, 1985). Parents of disabled children, in particular, have generally been unable to either receive or maintain needed specialized services. As in the for other non-English-speaking Asian immigrants, their needs have essentially remained unmet in many communities as a result of scare bilingual resources among schools and support service agencies.

Immigration policies have created hardships for other Asian immigrants as well. While attempting to obtain "waivers of excludability," Asian immigrant families have typically had to be separated from their disabled children for periods of 1 to 3 years. During this time, the affected child generally remains in the care of relatives or friends in the mother country. The difficulties which these caretakers experience have often strained relationships with the child's family in the United States. In addition to suffering from their child's absence, many parents have also considered themselves guilty of temporarily "abandoning" their child. In one tragic case, a parent couple emigrated to the United States and, after several years, finally obtained a waiver for their only child, who remained in Burma. However, during the period of time, the Burmese government enacted immigration laws which ultimately prevented the parents from reentering the country to obtain their child (Chan, 1978).

Even after immigrant families are finally united with disabled family members, they have had to submit annual reports regarding the status of such individuals to the U.S. Government Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia. Parents who are fearful of jeopardizing their immigration status may demonstrate a persistent reluctance to make use of the available public services of local government agencies. Underemployment and grossly inadequate family resources further contribute to the despair experienced by those parents who came to America seeking a "cure" for their affected child.

These experiences and conditions serve to illustrate the potentially severe social, political, and governmental stresses which profoundly impact Asian immigrant families with exceptional children. Advocates and providers must acknowledge and be sensitive to such stresses as they relate to the respective ethnic groups. Specific information regarding when, why, and under what circumstances particular families emigrated to the United States is critical in facilitating an understanding of the child's and parents' needs. As previously suggested, Asian immigrant families and special needs children cannot be understood, evaluated, nor served in terms of isolated clinical or narrow professional perspectives. The historical experiences of loss, discrimination, and forces which erode family stability each contribute to the immigrant parents' identity, institutional/agency perceptions, and participation in their child's care.

## CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The Asian immigrant experience in the United States has been further characterized by complex acculturation processes. In response to a generally hostile and threatening environment, early immigrants formed segregated communities that served as buffers for their survival. Such isolation contributed to the reinforcement and preservation of well-ingrained cultural traditions (Sue, 1981). Throughout the process of increasing acculturation among successive generations of Asian Americans, selected traditional cultural values and corresponding family socialization practices have persisted. Moreover, recent Asian immigrant populations have also established residence in ethnic communities wherein their respective languages and cultural styles (both traditional and contemporary Asian) are maintained.

Thus, despite considerable variation among the generations of Asians in this country, certain common and enduring cultural traditions are evident. An overview of traditional Asian cultural values and socialization practices will indicate how they contract with Western norms--thereby producing "culture conflict" and additional family/parental stress.

### Basic Orientations and Values

Traditional cultural orientations and values among the various Asian ethnic groups are rooted in civilizations which have endured for over 5,000 years. Throughout the latter half of this history, most Asian cultures have been principally influenced by the doctrines and philosophies of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. Each religion offers a view of the world and prescriptions for living which emphasize selected virtues and adherence to codes of behavior.

Confucian thought, in particular, is guided by a philosophical orientation wherein harmony is the keynote of existence. The individual must strive to achieve intrapsychic harmony, interpersonal harmony, and harmony with nature as well as time (past, present, and future). This orientation is manifested in characteristic "situation centeredness" (in contrast to the typically Western orientation of individual centeredness). More specifically, in interpersonal relationships, the individual mobilizes his or her thought and action to conform to social reality rather than making social reality conform to the individual. Internal regulation (introspection and the development of self-control) is critical to this process and serves to promote the establishment of a stable social order.

Maintenance of harmony entails maintenance of social order and dictates conformity to rules of propriety. Individual status is defined in terms of well-defined traditional roles and corresponding formally prescribed behaviors. Thus, each individual occupies a definite place in society as well as within the family and must "know his or her place" and act in accordance with his or her position. Family and social behaviors are thus governed by esteem for hierarchical roles and relationships and the virtue of filial piety. Aside from its importance in maintaining social order and "giving face" (i.e., recognition and respect), filial piety is the prototype of desirable interpersonal relationships from which benevolence (viewed as the essential and highest quality of mental functioning) may emerge. Filial piety consists of unquestioning loyalty and obedience to parents and concern for and understanding of their needs and wishes. While originating between the child and his or her parents, this relationship is ultimately extended to relations with all authority (Tseng, 1973).

Prescribed roles and relationships thus emphasize subordination and interdependence. Each individual views himself or herself as an integral part of the totality of the family and the larger social structure and experiences a social/psychological dependence on others. Cooperation, obligation, and reciprocity are essential elements of social interaction. Again, these values sharply contrast with Western ideals of competition, autonomy, and self-reliance in the context of a society with significantly less well-defined, more highly varied, and often ambiguous social/familial roles and expectations.

Belief in the supremacy of the universal order over oneself is further manifested in reverence for the past. The individual is viewed as the product of all generations of the family from the beginning of time. People's behaviors, therefore, reflect upon their ancestors as well as their race. While striving to defend the family's honor and enhance its reputation, the individual must properly observe historical events and maintain family traditions. This traditional orientation toward living with the past also differs markedly from the Western preoccupation with the future and living for tomorrow.

**Child Rearing Practices**

While serving as the principal guides for thinking and behavior, traditional cultural orientations and values have profoundly influenced the socialization experience of Asian children. Specific information pertaining to the values, family life, and child rearing practices of respective Asian populations has been presented in several recent publications. Primary references addressing

multiple Asian, Indochinese, and Pacific Island ethnic groups include Union of Pan Asian Communities (1980), Pan Asian Parent Education Project (1982), Matsuo (1982), and Powell (1983). Additional references pertaining specifically to Chinese (Hsu, 1981; Huang, 1976), Japanese (Kitano & Kikumura, 1976), and selected Indochinese groups (Dung, 1984; National Indochinese Clearinghouse, 1980) are also available. Examination of this literature reveals obvious variation in the child rearing values and practices of respective Asian ethnic groups. However, as is the case with basic cultural orientations and values, there is significantly more commonality across ethnic groups with respect to selected traditional child rearing practices. Such characteristic patterns warrant summary review.

Each Asian cultural group treasures the newborn child as a "gift from the gods," the center of the universe. Assumed to be born with a predilection for good, children must nonetheless receive proper training and learning in order to develop their "innate" positive characteristics. While proper training is thus considered essential, children are initially perceived as being relatively helpless and not responsible for their actions. Parents are, therefore, very tolerant and permissive (by Western standards), and immediately gratify their infants' early dependency needs. Mother-infant interaction is characterized by an emphasis on close physical contact rather than active vocal stimulation. Children usually sleep in the same room or bed with their parents for an extended period of time. There is an absence of rigid schedules, and parents generally have later age expectations (relative to parents from Western cultures) with respect to early developmental processes such as weaning and self-feeding. Throughout infancy and the toddler period, children are provided with a very nurturant, secure, and predictable environment by their parents and other members of their nuclear and extended families. This experience serves as the foundation for the development of very strong family attachments.

The preschool period represents a transitional phase wherein children are expected to assume increasingly greater responsibility for their own behavior. Parental expectations for earlier acquisition of pre-academic and self-help skills (e.g., grooming, dressing, completing chores) are evident. Upon reaching school age, children experience accelerated movement toward independence training within the context of the family and home environment. The process is facilitated, in part, by inclusion of children in adult affairs and activities such as weddings, funerals, and social and business functions. They thus receive early exposure to socially appropriate patterns and proper codes of behavior which are quickly learned through participation, observation, and imitation. The immediate parent-child relationship also becomes more formal, and adult demands are more rigidly enforced. In contrast to the repeated indulgence experienced during earlier years, children are now subjected to markedly increased discipline.

Behaviors which are punished include disobedience, aggression (particularly sibling-directed), and failure to fulfill primary responsibilities. Parents may respond to more serious transgressions by either threatening or actually engaging in temporary removal of the child from the family household (e.g., locking the child outside the home) and/or isolating the child from the family social life. Other forms of discipline include the use of shaming, scolding, or guilt induction, which result in "loss of face." Children are urged to adopt an empathic orientation and consider the negative impact of their deviant behavior on others (including the distress and shame which they have caused

their parents/family to experience). Children will also be reminded of the subsequent ridicule and rejection they may encounter when interacting with those whose approval they seek.

Highly valued behaviors such as completing chores and academic achievement are recognized indirectly. In essence, a child is expected to do well in these areas and therefore seldom receives contingent rewards or social reinforcement for various performances. Acknowledgment of accomplishment is often manifested in the form of parental exhortations to "do better," to strive for even higher levels of achievement. These normative patterns of behavior extend to extra-familial relationships whereby praising oneself or family members in the presence of others in prohibited. In fact, compliments are often politely dismissed or negated by immediate counter-discussion of faults and self-deprecating remarks.

Among critical child rearing factors is the existence of well-defined roles and corresponding sets of behavior for each family member. These roles are highly interdependent and exist within a cohesive patriarchal vertical structure. Parents' foremost concerns revolve around their parental roles and child rearing responsibilities. They are prepared to readily sacrifice personal needs in serving the interests of their children and in providing for the welfare and security of the family as a whole. In turn, parents assume the right to demand unquestioning obedience from their children. This relationship represents the aforementioned virtue of filial piety, whereby the role of parents is to define the law and the duty of children is to listen and obey. The authority of parents extends to grandparents and uncles and aunts, who are clearly paternal and maternal in their involvement with children. Such authority translates into personal accountability and responsibility for the children's behavior, which is considered a direct reflection of the parents' ability to provide proper guidance. Misbehavior on the part of children is thus generally attributed to inadequate or improper training at home.

As children mature and eventually acquire younger siblings, they too must assume selected child rearing responsibilities augmenting those of the parents. Older siblings are routinely delegated the responsibility of caring for younger siblings and are thus expected to model adult-like behaviors in order to set good examples. Like parents, older siblings are also expected to periodically sacrifice personal needs in favor of younger siblings. These roles are formalized to the extent that children in the family are addressed by kinship terms which indicate whether they are older or younger and which may further specify their ordinal position in the family. The "reciprocity" inherent is sibling relationships is clearly illustrated in the classic parental response to sibling arguments: the older sibling is generally scolded for not setting a good example, and the younger sibling is chastized for failing to respect the older brother or sister.

The children thus learn to view their role within the family and society in terms of relationships and obligations. They must readily acquire a sense of moral obligation and primary loyalty to the family. This translates into behaviors which serve to maintain and enhance the family name, honor, and face. Herein lies the "pride and shame" principle whereby individual behavior reflects on the entire family. On the one hand, highly valued individual achievements such as academic or occupational success serve to promote the family welfare and are a source of shared pride among family members. On the

other hand, dysfunctional, antisocial, or otherwise negatively valued behavior exhibited by a family member results in a collective family experience of profound shame.

Observance of specified roles, relationships, and codes of conduct results in a persistent awareness of the effects of one's behavior on others. In contrast to the more egocentric, individualistic orientation characteristic of Western culture, Asian children are socialized to think and act in proper relation to others and must learn to transcend their personal concerns. Parents thus effectively share and control much of their children's behavior by appealing to their sense of duty or obligation. As noted earlier, they may periodically evoke fear of personal ridicule or the prospect of family shame as a consequence of misbehavior.

In general, Asian parents are significantly more controlling, restrictive, and protective of their children than are Anglo parents. Children are taught to suppress aggressive behavior, overt expressions of negative emotions, and personal grievances; they must inhibit strong feelings and exercise self-control in order to maintain family harmony. There is a typical avoidance of frank discussion or highly verbal communication between parent and child. This is particularly true in the area of sexuality, which is suppressed in cultures where physical contact is minimized and public expression of affection are rare and embarrassing. The communication pattern is also one-way: parent to child (the parent speaks, and the child listens). The father is particularly distant in this respect and does not generally invite confidences or initiate "talks" with his children. The mother-child relationship is closer and more verbal. Father-mother interaction is often characterized by indirect communications, inferences, and unstated feelings.

The protective and controlling orientation of Asian parents may also be manifested in a basic destruct of outsiders. In an attempt to control outside influences, parents often restrict their children's social interaction by allowing access to only selected role models (e.g., family and close friends), this may include the children's peer group and playmates. Asian children are also trained to be dependent upon their parents for a significantly longer period of time in comparison to Anglo children of the same age. Independent peer interaction and autonomous social behavior (including ultimately leaving the family to reside outside the home) occur at much later ages relative to Western norms.

Each of the child rearing and socialization practices characteristic of tradition-oriented Asian families described here obviously impact upon parental attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors vis-a-vis schools and various family support services. Parents of special needs children may also be significantly influenced by traditional social views, attitudes, and corresponding coping strategies related to children with handicapping conditions.

**Views of Handicapping Conditions and Coping Strategies**

Among the various Asian ethnic groups, major handicapping conditions (e.g., serious emotional disturbance, mental retardation, physical/sensory disabilities) are traditionally viewed with considerable stigma. Such stigma is created, in part, by traditional attributions which link specific handicapping conditions to various causes.

One of the more common explanations for the existence of a disability in a child is that it represents a punishment for sins or moral transgressions committed by the parents or their ancestors (Chan, 1976). This notion of hereditary taint is illustrated in the specific attributions discussed by more tradition-oriented parents of developmentally disabled children. For example, in a study conducted by Chan (1978), a Chinese father reported experiencing a great deal of guilt associated with the fact that he had gambled extensively and was involved in an extramarital affair at the time of his wife's pregnancy with their second child--thereby "causing" his son to be born with cerebral palsy. A Japanese mother of an emotionally disturbed girl believed her daughter had inherited "bad genes" from a maternal great uncle who was an alcoholic with a violent temper.

Another type of attribution is the assumption that handicapped individuals are possessed by demons, ghosts, or evil spirits. For example, a Korean mother of two mentally retarded boys claimed that their "sickness" was caused by the "spirit of a dead horse" which had entered their bodies during her pregnancies. She, in turn, sought the "cure" for their affliction by resorting to daily prayer and meditation. Another mother, who thought her severely retarded daughter was possessed by a ghost, would regularly bring the child to a monk who sang chants and provided her with a "lucky charm" made from herbs to hang around the girl's neck (Chan, 1978; Lim-Yee, 1983). In cases of children with epilepsy, family members are know to seek the help of monks, priests, or shamans to perform healing rituals or exorcisms and thus drive the "demon" from the child's body.

Various Chinese mothers of disabled children have also related the causes of their children's disabilities to behaviors which they engaged in during their pregnancy with the affected children. One mother was a seamstress who frequently used scissors throughout her pregnancy; she felt that she was thus responsible for her daughter's congenital hand anomaly, which was characterized by a split thumb. A mother of a child with a cleft palate assumed that it was related to her having seen horror films and pictures of evil gods during the initial stages of her pregnancy. Yet another, the mother of an autistic child, insisted that her temper outbursts during her pregnancy were the cause of the child's disorder (Chan-sew, 1980).

Apart from moralistic, spiritual, or superstitious attributions, there exist other traditional beliefs which attribute handicapping conditions to an imbalance (excess or deficiency) of physiological functions (Lin & Lin 1978). These beliefs originate from the theoretical system of Chinese medicine, which emphasizes the importance of the mind-body relationship and the principle that health is maintained when the forces of Yin and Yang and the "five elements" of the body are balanced and in harmony. Whenever an imbalance occurs, illness results. Traditional Chinese family members may thus relate handicapping conditions in children to an unbalanced diet during the mother's pregnancy. For example, a parent of a Down syndrome child attributed her daughter's hypotonia to her failure to drink adequate amounts of beef bone soup during pregnancy. Eating lamb or veal, on the other hand, is forbidden because such meat is believed to cause epilepsy in the unborn child; in fact, one of the Chinese colloquialisms for epilepsy is synonymous with a disease in lambs which is manifested as a seizure disorder. Other foods such as bananas and watermelons are also to be avoided because they purportedly create imbalance



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in Yin and Yang forces. Excessive iron intake is believed by some to result in a fetus with hard bones, thus contributing to a potentially difficult labor and delivery (Lim-Yee, 1983).

Traditional assumptions regarding the etiology of various handicapping conditions are often accompanied by traditional views concerning the nature of specific disorders. Among many Asian languages, a number of different terms are used to describe characteristics associated with conditions such as mental retardation or mental illness. These terms are often highly varied, possibly inconsistent, and do not necessarily connote the same meaning nor refer to precise clinical descriptions corresponding to the English definitions of selected disorders. Mental retardation may be equated with mental illness. Mental illness, in turn, may be narrowly defined in terms of extreme deviance and equated with overtly aggressive, antisocial, acting-out behavior.

However, parents may be highly tolerant of deviant behavior in young children and reluctant to admit to their perceived inability to cope with problems by seeking professional help. A sense of parental inadequacy is particularly acute if they have children who are exhibiting persistent learning and/or psychosocial difficulties in the school setting. Such problems are often traditionally attributed to "laziness" and oppositional behavior on the part of the affected children as well as the presumed inability or failure of the parents to provide "proper training." Given such training and sufficient parental resolve, these children are expected to mature and ultimately outgrow their difficulties.

Each of these traditional views pertaining to the causes and nature of handicapping conditions obviously create family embarrassment, shame, and stigma. Even if exposed to objective information about the child's disability, parents must still cope with the prospect that their affected son or daughter will be unable to fulfill expectations of academic or occupational achievement which give the family a "good name." The subsequent emotional reactions experienced by parents may vary considerably and are influenced by a number of unique family and child characteristics as well as experiences in receiving information/assistance from professionals. These characteristics have been detailed by Blacher (1984), who has also challenged the popular assumption that parents of handicapped children proceed through an ordered sequence of discrete "stages of adjustment" and ultimately attain a "final stage" of "acceptance." Lim-Yee (1983) has further indicated how classic "grief cycle" phases such as denial and guilt are directly affected by traditional cultural beliefs and orientations.

Among such orientations is a philosophical perspective which is fatalistic in nature. If life is presumed to be essentially unalterable and unpredictable, there is a need for resignation to external conditions and events over which one supposedly has little or no control. Within this context, human suffering is viewed as part of the natural order. Acceptance of one's fate, perseverance without complaint, maintenance of inner strength, and emotional self-restraint are thus considered necessary expressions of dignity. Accordingly, parents may be expected to stoically accept their fate and lifelong burden as principal caretakers of their handicapped children. However, depending upon what the parents perceive the cause to be of child's disability, they may nonetheless seek the advice of "indigenous healers" and employ traditional remedies such as healing ceremonies and rituals, herbal medicines, and acupuncture (Egawa & Tashima, 1982).

Traditional views of handicapping conditions and related coping strategies clearly influence the way Asian families respond to available services. An emerging pattern of avoiding agency support services is further exacerbated by fears among immigrants of risking deportation as public charges if they become dependent upon public services. However, beyond various cultural orientations and fears, lack of adequate information about available resources and institutional barriers (including language barriers) continue to serve as the primary deterrents to effective use of existing services by Asian parents with special needs children. Sufficient knowledge of available services must be complemented by trust in those who provide such services of follow-through is to occur. The development of such trust is facilitated by awareness of and sensitivity to cultural styles and behaviors evidenced in interactions with professionals.

**Interaction Styles Relative to Service Providers**

Critical to the process of gaining initial access to Asian families and clients is a recognition of the aforementioned "trust" factor and the degree to which traditional family- and ethnic- or community-centered orientations contribute to a tendency to view "outsiders" with a degree of suspicion (Sue, 1981). Helping professionals, particularly those employed by public human service institutions (including schools and health care, mental health, and social service agencies), must be aware of the proper entry points to Asian communities. More specifically, certain formal and informal communication networks and established social relationships within selected Asian communities play a major role in determining whether or not a family in need will view an available public service as acceptable or trustworthy (Murase, 1977). Thus, "third parties" or indigenous intermediaries who are trusted and have credibility within the community may need to inform to given family about the type of service to be offered and its corresponding value. These same individuals (who might include parents of special needs children) or other bilingual family friends or advocates may then need to accompany families on their initial visits to various agencies, particularly those agencies which do not have staff who are proficient in the native Asian language of the family. The information source through which a family learns about a particular service, the nature of corresponding word-of-mouth communications, and initial encounters or first experiences with the agency all profoundly contribute to the agency's reputation within the community and its ultimate acceptability (Chan, 1985).

Public agencies should thus acknowledge the liaison role of community "gatekeepers" and bilingual family members, friends, or advocates in providing initial support, reassurance, and needed information, thereby facilitating successful entry into a "system." However, continued reliance upon such individuals as translators or interpreters for subsequent interactions with the family (particularly those which are clinical in nature) may be inappropriate. Communication difficulties and role conflicts often arise from personal relationships and the liaison's lack of direct training in addressing potentially complex issues and conveying technical information. The use of "outside" translators is also problematic if they are not sufficiently familiar with the nature and purpose of various client interactions, do not exhibit professional behaviors (including an ability to maintain confidentiality of information), and/or fail to accurately translate and interpret the genuine content of provider-client communications. When bilingual/bicultural staff

are available, their proficiency in the specific dialects spoken by the client population must be carefully assessed. Moreover, the individual characteristics of such staff members (e.g., country of origin, social class background, interpersonal skills, sensitivity, reliability, and overall competence and credibility) will significantly impact upon the establishment of successful client contacts and relationships.

Once contact has been established, tradition-oriented clients will likely expect an initial formality characterized by well-defined roles and clear communication regarding what is being requested and/or what specific services can be offered. Among Asian populations there exists a traditional orientation toward professionals as authority figures who are directive, employ structured, practical problem-solving approaches, and provide specific "answers" and recommendations. The professional is assumed to have expertise and the ability to offer assistance which uniquely supplements family resources. The establishment of credibility and the provision of concrete, direct services from the outset is thus likely to facilitate client follow-through and maintenance of the professional-client relationship. These considerations are especially significant for families who have been referred for initial public services after a prolonged period of exclusively drawing upon, and possibly exhausting, private family resources and coping strategies in response to an exceptional child's problems and needs.

Throughout the process of developing an initial relationship, the service provider should also be cognizant of the family's "face-saving" needs. Many Asian parents may experience intense shame, guilt, and anxiety in seeking or being encouraged to seek outside professional help. These reactions may be intensified for parents who have been requested to participate in child-related conferences or educational planning meetings. The traditional parental orientation toward schools or professionals entrusted with the education and care of children is one of deference, noninterference, and delegation of authority and responsibility. Thus, despite mainstream philosophical movements and corresponding legislative mandates dictating "parent involvement," this concept may be both alien and threatening to traditional Asian parents--particularly if formal requests for parent participation are interpreted as indications that the child's difficulties have exceeded the professionals' teaching or intervention capabilities and the parents are thus being held accountable.

Whether parents are requested to meet with professionals or have initiated efforts to obtain assistance, their ultimate public disclosure of child- or family-related problems may be extremely difficult. Within the context of traditional behavioral dictates, such disclosure may be considered a betrayal of family loyalty or trust, an act of weakness, and/or a form of disgracing the family's honor or reputation. This belief is reinforced by a more general reticence to "burden" others with problems which the parent or family should be able to resolve internally. Moreover, sharing personal problems and concerns with an authority figure (even though such an individual is an identified helping professional) may be construed as an act of disrespect (Toupin, 1980). This perception obviously affects counseling transactions with mental health professionals whose roles and expectations are conceptually foreign to many tradition-oriented Asians (Chan, 1980; Kitano & Matsushima, 1981; Sue, 1981).

Sensitivity to an individual's or family's need to save face can be demonstrated in various ways. The helping professional is cautioned against venturing into a frank discussion of specific problem areas too quickly. Although the client typically may expect formality at the outset, the professional is encouraged to spend time establishing personal rapport and to allow for discussion of information which may only be indirectly related or even unrelated to the referring problems or perceived needs. Asian parents typically will place great value on the helping professional's continued expression of interest and concern for their general health and well-being, scheduling flexibility and accommodation, and willingness to meet in culturally familiar surroundings or make home visits and to provide direct assistance or accompaniment in contacts with other agencies/professionals while assuming an active role as child and family advocate.

Unfortunately, agency fiscal constraints and/or the professional's designated roles and responsibilities may prohibit or limit such involvement. Nevertheless. the professional can still effectively communicate genuine personal regard for the client's welfare while remaining aware of reasonable boundaries in satisfying the client's dependency needs. This process may be difficult for service providers who are unfamiliar with the traditional Asian orientation toward authority. Historically, members of Western cultures have perceived Asians as being "inscrutable" people who rarely display emotion or speak their minds. Ethnocentric service providers may thus "clinically" interpret client behavior patterns as being indicative of passivity, submissiveness, excessive dependency, or even resistance. Such value judgments can lead to frustrating attempts to aggressively prompt the client into increased self-disclosure, independent decision making, and action. The resulting provider-client alienation is then rationalized in terms of the need to assist others who are ostensibly more willing to cooperate and demonstrate initiative.

Service providers thus may directly contribute to deteriorating relationships with Asian clients by failing to acknowledge certain behavior patterns as manifestations of deference to authority. As noted earlier, traditional Asians are highly aware of their rank or place within a given social structure; their corresponding prescribed role governs their behavior to the extent of determining their speech and general countenance (Toupin, 1980). Personal characteristics such as age, sex, education, occupation, social status, family background, and marital or parental status may each serve to dictate what is communicated between individuals and in what manner. Respective individual attributes and the nature of a given relationship will traditionally determine language structure and behaviors such as who will bow the lowest, initiate communication, change subjects, speak more softly or loudly, look away when eyes meet, and be most accommodating (Shon, 1980). Thus, when interacting with professionals, Asian clients may convey respect for authority by engaging in prescribed behaviors such as repeated head-nodding, avoidance of direct eye contact, minimizing spontaneous verbalizations (including asking questions or making one's needs or desires explicit), and refraining from critical comments.

Unfortunately, the primary importance of conveying respect and adhering to traditional virtues such as patience, reserve, and "holding back" can result in a persistent reluctance to seek clarification or explanations of written materials, specific verbal communications, or agency/provider expectations.

Moreover, limited- or non-English-speaking Asian clients who are unfamiliar with American institutions and cultural nuances are the most likely to demonstrate such reluctance while remaining in great need of relevant information. This tendency is particularly apparent in the area of advocacy and Asian parents' initial orientation toward pursuing the legal rights and service entitlements of their special needs children. In contrast to the American saying, "The squeaky wheel gets the grease," Asians may be more inclined to abide by the proverb, "The nail that sticks up will get pounded down."

Traditional Asian parents may thus postpone indicating their choice of alternatives or following through on multiple recommendations which are presented to them. The perceived ambiguity of the professional-client relationship exacerbates parental anxiety and fear of committing a social error in behavior or speech which will invoke a "loss of face." When given options, parents may be primarily concerned about selecting those which are perceived to be most valued by the professional. If unsure, parents will conservatively avoid "second guessing" the professional and the possibility of selecting the "wrong" choice or course of action--thereby preventing potential loss of face. Therefore, the professional must be patient and allow for sufficient time and input to facilitate client decision making. The Asian cultural value placed on private preparation before public action is embodied in the proverb, "Think over three times, then act." Throughout this process, the professional must also recognize the family as the primary social unit and the traditional role of senior family members in collectively providing input, making decisions, and resolving problems as they relate to individual within the family.

Successful professional-client relationships are often characterized by the Asian parent's ensuing sense of obligation and reciprocity. If the services provided by the professional are highly valued, the parents feel a need to respond to actions which are kind and helpful--particularly those which are ostensibly "freely" given and for which direct monetary repayment is unnecessary (as is the case for various public services). In the absence of opportunities to respond reciprocally to the professional's own needs for assistance, parents must display their gratitude through gift-giving or personalized expressions of repayment. Moreover, the debt which is owed is viewed as lifelong. Such reciprocity differs from the straightforward expression of gratitude in the Western sense; it is the basis of a relationship or bond of friendship which persists long after the initial debt has been paid. Therefore, the professional's refusal to accept a client's offer of gifts, favors, or invitations for more personal social interaction may be construed as rejection and failure to give face. Considerable tact, forethought, and sensitivity must be employed in such situations.

## PARENT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The preceding review of selected historical experiences and cultural influences illustrates the potential complexities of serving parents of exceptional Asian children. Nevertheless, the interaction and interdependence of parent/child characteristics and family experiences must be systematically examined and incorporated into the parent education or counseling process (Young, 1980). Related service programs, however, have typically failed to develop an ecological perspective whereby the child's needs are assessed within the

cultural/linguistic contexts of the home, school, and community. This deficiency persists despite Public Law 94-142 and Public Law 98-199 amendments which mandate meaningful parent involvement in the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating the handicapped child's education in each of the above contexts.

Given the acute shortage of bilingual service providers, education and training programs for non-English-speaking Asian parents are an essential means of promoting access to needed services as well as increased parent involvement in the child's education. The critical need for culturally/linguistically appropriate parent training models and materials has prompted the development of such programs for selected Asian populations.

One of the earliest reported group parent education programs designed specifically for Asian families with disabled children was conducted by Chan (1977). The number of parent participants was relatively small, including both English- and non-English-speaking Japanese American parents representing three successive generations whose children presented with primary diagnoses such as attention deficit disorder, autism, and mental retardation. The program was implemented as a preliminary investigation of culturally relevant parent training variables. Thus a variety of both child and parent assessment instruments were employed. The parents were specifically assessed with regard to individual child rearing attitudes, perceptions of their particular child's disability (etiology, associated characteristics, prognosis and expectations), coping styles, and specific needs for child intervention and family support services. Findings were then integrated into a parent education curriculum which included practical and readily understandable information about the children's specific handicapping conditions; child development principles and the specific developmental levels of the children; behavior management and teaching techniques; and relevant community resources.

The successful outcomes of this initial program reinforced the importance of providing parents with comprehensive information and practical skills which will increase their effectiveness in meeting the exceptional child's needs (Chan, 1982). Subsequent investigations and diverse parent training programs contributed to the refinement of culturally/linguistically responsive models and methodologies for various Asian populations (S. Chan, 1983). These efforts culminated in the establishment of a major statewide "Parent Education/Training (PET) Project" which served non- and limited-English-speaking Chinese, Korean, and Latino parents with young developmentally disabled children.

The basic elements of the PET model and corresponding methodologies, curriculum materials, and findings have been detailed by Chan, Lim-Yee, and Vandevier (1985). Among the unique aspects of the model was the role of the "parent facilitator." This role was adapted from the "Connections" model of parent training which was originally developed and field-tested for English-speaking parents (Mendoza, 1982). The PET Project parent facilitator was a bilingual parent of a developmentally disabled child who served as a co-leader with a professional training coordinator in conducting the parent groups. The parent facilitator was also instrumental in initially recruiting parent participants, conducting needs assessments, and ensuring continued parent participation. Such efforts were enhanced by preliminary facilitator training in the areas of adult learning principles, effective teaching modalities, communication and leadership skills, group process variables, and culture-specific group interaction and participation factors.

The positive impact of the PET program on parent participants was highly significant at a number of different levels. In addition to profound attitudinal and behavioral changes occurring among individual parents, continued group support and organizational activities emerged from the project. Another product was the establishment of a subsequent 2-year "Multicultural Training-of-Trainers Project" which has enabled selected PET Project parent facilitators and past participants to collaborate with professional team members and assume primary leadership roles in implementing ongoing parent education programs within their respective communities (Chan, 1984).

## CONCLUSION

Despite the relative success of reported parent education and training programs for Asian families with exceptional children, they have only begun to address the critical needs of this population. Expanded and sustained commitment of resources to effective outreach, assessment, training, and service models must occur among major institutions mandated to serve handicapped children and their families.

In the meantime, Asian parents and community advocates require genuine support in their efforts to access and improve available resources. Interdisciplinary and interagency communication and coordination can further enhance such endeavors--particularly when available bilingual/bicultural providers and indigenous community resource persons can be enlisted for direct/indirect service and consultation. All who work with Asian parents are also called upon to demonstrate sensitivity and versatility in effectively responding to the diverse nationalities, language dialects, cultural orientations, immigration histories, and life experiences of families with exceptional children.

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CHAPTER 5

# GIFTED AND TALENTED ASIAN CHILDREN

Margie K. Kitano

Although Asian and Pacific American (APA) children comprise only 2.2% of the school-age population, they constitute 4.4% of the identified gifted students, twice the expected number. In contrast, the proportion of Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians identified as gifted represents only half that expected from enrollment statistics (see Chapter 1 by Chan & Kitano). The underrepresentation of non-Asian minorities among the identified gifted student population stems from standardized assessment procedures that are biased against cultural characteristics conflicting with those of the dominant society. Although APA cultures differ in many ways from the majority culture, the Asian values of educational attainment and obedience to authority clearly support achievement in American schools. Hence, assessment procedures designed to identify high achievers are consistent with APA values and, in fact, may be biased in favor of Asian minority students.

Whatever the explanation, Asian and Pacific American children appear in significant proportions in programs for gifted students, especially in districts with high numbers of APA students. The important question concerns appropriate methods for fostering the achievement of APA students identified as gifted. This chapter suggests general approaches for working with gifted APA students based on relevant cultural characteristics and definitions of giftedness.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED APA CHILDREN

The chapter by Chan and Kitano emphasized the heterogeneity of APA groups related to such factors as generation in America, language spoken, level of acculturation, rural or urban origin, country of birth, immigration experience (voluntary or refugee), and socioeconomic status. Similarly, characteristics of gifted APA children discussed here must be considered as they relate to the individual student.

The scant literature available on gifted APA children reiterates their overrepresentation relative to the proportion of APAs in the general population and emphasizes academic achievement and motivation as salient characteristics. Chen and Goon (1976) found that teachers and counselors described gifted Asian



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children in New York's Chinatown as getting along better with others, especially adults; working more diligently; demonstrating humor and sarcasm without viciousness; and being stronger in math compared to gifted non-Asian children. Although English was their second language, the gifted Asian children's verbal ability was described as equal to or better than that of their non-Asian gifted peers.

Sociologist Harry Kitano (1975) noted that some Asian American children labeled as gifted instead may be high achievers who conform to teacher expectations of behavior and who may face an unhealthy degree of pressure to perform. Clearly, more data are needed to accurately describe characteristics of APA children identified as gifted by the schools.

Investigations of creativity and schooling experiences in Asian countries lead to conflicting predictions about the creative behavior of APA children residing in the United States. Torrance (1980) has attributed much of Japan's remarkable technological, educational, and social/economic achievement to national valuing of individual creativity, self-development, intuitive thinking, persistence, discipline, and group problem solving. Moreover, there is some (albeit conflicting) evidence (Price-Williams & Ramirez, 1977; Torrance, Wu, Gowan, & Aliotti, 1970) relating bilingualism to tested creativity. However, the memorization/recitation style of some Asian educational systems (Dinh, 1976; Maldonado, 1976) and child-rearing practices emphasizing conformity, being correct, and obedience (see Chapter 4 by Sam Chan) mitigate against development of the creative personality. Research on child rearing practices of parents of creative children (Dewing, 1970, 1973; Domino, 1969; Getzels & Jackson, 1961; Nichols, 1964) suggests that creative children come from less inhibited, less dependable, and less structured family environments which encourage diversity and risk taking. Achieving children, in contrast, have more authoritarian families which encourage conformity and minimize risk. Relating these findings to APA child-rearing practices, it appears that APA families may be more likely to foster academic achievement than creativity.

## DEFINING GIFTEDNESS

Giftedness has been described in a variety of ways. One definition particularly appropriate to a discussion of gifted APA children is Renzulli's (1978) "three-ring" conceptualization: giftedness is an interaction among "above-average though not necessarily superior general ability, task commitment, and creativity" (p. 182). Renzulli based his definition on research indicating that (a) little relationship exists between test scores/school grades and real world accomplishments; (b) productive gifted individuals are characterized by an ability to become totally involved in a problem; and (c) eminent individuals gain recognition because of their creative accomplishments. In short, gifted individuals possess high task commitment and creativity, as well as above average intelligence. One implication is that education of gifted individuals should encourage development of all three characteristics in each person.



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Relating Renzulli's definition to APA cultures, it would appear that gifted APA children as a group would tend to demonstrate the characteristics of above average ability and task commitment more than creativity. While programs for gifted APA children should foster development in all three areas, creativity may require emphasis.

## INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES

Teaching strategies recommended for gifted students in general (Kitano, 1982; Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Maker, 1982) can be appropriately used with gifted Asian and Pacific American children. However, it should be kept in mind that children taught to value correctness and conformity may be most comfortable performing tasks which require convergent thinking or solving problems which have a single correct answer. APA children may experience discomfort when performing tasks which require divergent thinking or dealing with problems for which there exist a wide variety of acceptable responses. This section provides suggestions for establishing an environment conducive to creative or divergent thinking and selected techniques for developing creative potential.

### Establishing the Environment

Teachers can provide an atmosphere which supports characteristics integral to creative thought: risk talking, reduction of self-consciousness, and tolerance of ambiguity. The following suggestions were adapted from Torrance (1963, 1965). Torrance (1977) has provided additional recommendations for developing the creative potential of culturally different students.

1. Provide a nonevaluative, nonthreatening atmosphere. Teacher and peer evaluations inhibit creativity by inducing fear of taking risks in responding. Eliminating external evaluation while children are engaging in creative thinking activities may be especially important for APA children, for whom teacher and peer criticism may produce feelings of shame and loss of face, inhibiting free-wheeling thought. The teacher can establish guidelines, such as "The goal is to generate as many ideas as possible. We will accept everyone's responses without judgment; judgment reduces the flow of ideas. There will be no giggling or groaning."

2. Offer many opportunities for creative production. Activities for developing creativity or divergent thinking should focus on (a) fluency, or the generation of many different responses; (b) flexibility, or the ability to see a problem in new ways; (c) originality, the production of unique responses; and (d) elaboration, the adding of detail. Examples of fluency activities include: "How many ways can you think of to end this story?" "What are all the factors which might affect a country's agricultural production?" Flexibility activities require students to adopt a new mind set: "How would the story be different if the antagonist were narrator?" Teachers can encourage originality by asking children to "make something that no one else will think of." Elaboration activities provide opportunities for embellishing stories, drawings, or ideas. For example, children can create new designs or objects by adding lines to geometric figures. Divergent thinking activities have no single

correct response. APA children may have difficulty responding to initial attempts to encourage divergent thinking if they have been socialized to "be correct." Teachers should not become discouraged. Rather, with patience, motivation, and enthusiasm on the teacher's part and many opportunities for practice, all children can learn to engage in divergent thinking.

3. Show respect for unusual questions, ideas, and solutions. Teachers can show children that their ideas have value by active listening. For example, if asking children to generate hypotheses to explain a scientific phenomenon, the teacher writes verbatim the child's idea on the board, asks the child if the teacher has captured the child's exact thought, revises what is written according to the child's feedback, and modifies the written statement as the child's ideas change over the session. Active listening communicates that the teacher has genuine interest in the child's ideas.

4. Provide opportunities for small group interaction. Groups of children can be assigned to solve problems, generate ideas, or create a novel product. Brainstorming in groups can stimulate new ideas in individual children and provide opportunities for cooperative planning and decision making. Such activities are consistent with the cooperative rather than competitive style of some APA cultural groups.

5. Model creativity, risk taking, and flexibility. Teachers can stimulate creative production by modeling creative behavior at appropriate times. For example, modifying daily schedules to take advantage of spontaneously occurring opportunities and ideas demonstrates a valuing of flexibility and openness to change.

**Selected Techniques**

Specific methods for encouraging divergent thinking which appear appropriate to APA children include attribute listing, creative problem solving, and guided fantasy.

**Crawford's Attribute Listing (Davis, 1976).** Attribute listing provides a structured format for creating a new product and hence constitutes a useful procedure for introducing demands for divergent thinking. Children are asked to design a new product, such as a new amusement park ride. The first step is to list all the important characteristics or attributes of amusement park rides, such as providing pleasurable sensations (temporary fear, excitement, humor, fantasy), safety, departure from real life. The children then generate ideas for each listed attribute, including combinations and elaborations of given ideas.

**Creative Problem Solving (Parnes, 1981).** Parnes' creative problem solving model delineates several steps within which students have great flexibility. Hence, the model provides an intermediate strategy between structured and more open approaches to facilitating creative thinking. In the first step, objective finding, the teacher asks students to brainstorm to identify a problem. Students list any thoughts, feelings, challenges, problems, and goals they have as a basis for selecting a problem to solve. The second step, fact finding, requires that students explore what is known about the problem by

listing all associations they have with the problem. Third, problem finding occurs through examining the situation from several viewpoints. For example, students consider how significant others might view the problem. In the fourth step, idea finding, the teacher has students generate many solutions. Listening to music and smelling a variety of aromas can help students develop new associations and ideas. The fifth step, solution finding, involves listing the criteria by which solutions to the problem should be evaluated. The solutions generated in step four are compared with these criteria. The final step is acceptance finding. Here, students develop a plan for implementing the solution. They might visualize putting the plan into action, thus anticipating possible obstacles and adjusting the plan accordingly.

**Guided Fantasy (Hershey & Kearns, 1979).** Guided fantasy encourages intuitive modes of thinking through more free-wheeling imaging. The teacher begins by coaching the children to relax by having them close their eyes and focus attention on parts of the body, progressing from head to toes. As they focus on each body part, they are asked to relax the part while breathing in and exhaling deeply. While the children are in a relaxed state, the teacher begins a fantasy upon which children make their own elaborations. For example, the teacher might say, "You are entering a lush green meadow. You can see dew drops on the individual leaves of clover. Brightly colored flowers grow in the meadow, and you can smell their sweet fragrance. In the distance, you can hear the bubbling of a brook; the sunlight reflects off the water. Trees surround the meadow, and you being to hear a soft rustling of their leaves. Something seems to be in the trees; something that makes you feel happy. I wonder what or who it is. You can take the time now and see it; notice how it looks and sounds." Children are given time to complete the fantasy and then are guided to gradually exit the fantasy, for example, by counting backward from ten to one and opening their eyes. Guided fantasy can be used effectively as a stimulus for creative writing or other activities requiring creative production.

## CONCLUSIONS

Many Asian and Pacific American children have cultural experiences which support achievement motivation and respect for adults. Gifted APA children who bring these experiences to the classroom may demonstrate high ability and task commitment and need support for creativity, the third dimension shared by gifted individuals who are productive. Activities recommended for gifted children in general can be used appropriately with APA children. Care should be taken to capitalize on APA children's strengths. Instructional approaches which reduce external evaluation, encourage risk taking, and provide many opportunities for divergent thinking can facilitate development of their creative potential.

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CHAPTER 6

# CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR LIMITED-ENGLISH-PROFICIENT EXCEPTIONAL CHINESE CHILDREN

Donna M. Chan

As limited-English-proficient (LEP) Chinese children are assessed for and placed in special education programs. the need for appropriate educational intervention arises. Professionals agree that there is a shortage of bilingual special education personnel to serve LEP exceptional children (Benavides, 1985; Fuchigami, 1980; Twomey, 1980), and this is especially true for Asian children.

An equally critical issue is the lack of appropriate instructional materials for these children (Bland, Sabatino, Sedlack, & Sternberg, 1979). Currently available curricula designed for handicapped learners are not sensitive to the linguistic and cultural background of Chinese LEP students. Conversely, the available Chinese bilingual/bicultural curricula have been developed for normal-functioning children and do not address the handicapping conditions of exceptional children. Thus, teachers who work with LEP exceptional children must develop their own curriculum materials which consider the learning characteristics, linguistic identification, and cultural background of the children.

This chapter discusses the issues that must be considered in developing curriculum materials for LEP exceptional Chinese children. Because of the paucity of information on these children in the professional literature, the comparative statements made about them here will be based primarily on the personal observations and experiences of the author. First, to provide a context for understanding LEP exceptional Chinese children, immigration history, demographics, and legal issues will be discussed.

## IMMIGRATION HISTORY

It is important to note that the majority of Chinese people who emigrated to the United States early on were from Southern China or Gwongtung Province. They are referred to as the Cantonese, or Cantonese-speaking people, because Cantonese is the language spoken in Canton City (the major city of Gwongtung) and Hong Kong. Cantonese-speaking people make up the largest number of Chinese

immigrants in California (California State Department of Education [California], 1984a) and in most other areas in this country.

The immigration of the Chinese to America can be viewed in two stages: early immigration from the middle 1800's to the middle 1900's and modern immigration from the middle 1900's to the present.

The first stage of Chinese immigration began in the early 1850's (California, 1984a). This group of immigrants came to California primarily to seek a better means of supporting their families. The new immigrants initially were welcomed because of their diligence in providing needed services in the labor force. However, as more Chinese arrived and competed for jobs, they were met with anti-Sino sentiments. A series of discriminatory laws were introduced which denied Chinese children access to public education, precluded the Chinese from the right to enterprise, prohibited them from becoming United States citizens, and restricted their right to follow their cultural traditions. These discriminatory legal actions culminated with the federal Exclusion Act of 1882, which precluded laborers from entering the United States.

Despite the discrimination and restrictions, the Chinese endured, persevered, and prospered, reversing many of the negative sentiments toward them. In 1943, the Magnuson Act repealed the Exclusion Act, setting a quota for the admission of Chinese into the United States. A series of laws followed which declared the old laws unconstitutional and returned rights to the Chinese.

The Immigration Act of 1965, which removed restrictive quotas, began the next stage of immigration of the Chinese to the United States. There was an influx of people from Hong Kong and China to the United States between 1966 and 1977, followed by the arrival of the "Boat People" from Indochina. Although the "Boat People" had been residents of Indochina, 85% of these refugees were Cantonese-speaking (California, 1984a).

Since the normalization of relations between the United States and China, the Chinese have continued to flow into the United States, increasing the number of limited-English-proficient students who enroll in the public schools.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The 1980 census revealed 806,040 ethnic Chinese living in the United States. California reported the largest number with 318,524 (California, 1984a), living primarily in San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Sacramento, and San Jose. Two other states with a large number of Chinese residents are New York and Hawaii.

A recent California census identified the number of students who use Cantonese as their primary language. During the spring of 1984, 33,051 students were reported to be either LEP or FEP (full-English-proficient), with Cantonese as their primary language. Of these students, 18,139 were identified as LEP (California, 1984b). A 1985 count revealed 9,672 Asian students receiving special education services in California (the Chinese representing the largest group within this ethnic category). Of that number, 3,163 were identified as specific learning disabled (Furukawa, 1985).

## LEGAL ISSUES

The legal framework upon which educational programs for bilingual exceptional children are based is the result of a combination of laws and lawsuits which were activated during the 1960's and 1970's.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the first piece of legislation to provide for racial and ethnic minorities. It prohibited school districts from discriminating against students on the basis of race, color, or national origin in federally funded programs. Subsequently, the United States Office of Civil Rights (OCR) disseminated a memorandum listing requirements for nondiscriminatory assessment and placement of minority children into special education programs.

To meet the needs of the increasing number of LEP children, Congress passed the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, which provided funding for school districts to establish and develop bilingual programs, bilingual curriculum and materials, and bilingual teacher training.

In 1974, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously in favor of the plaintiffs in the Lau v. Nichols case (414 U.S. 563[1974]). This class action suit on behalf of Kenny Lau and 1,800 other Chinese students in the San Francisco Unified School District claimed that in failing to provide programs to meet the linguistic needs of non-English-speaking students, the district was violating their civil rights under Section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It was this Court decision which spurred the development of bilingual-bilcultural programs, providing for identification, assessment, and instruction for all LEP children.

Several events which almost paralleled the bilingual education litigation provided the impetus for the development of special education programs. The major event was the enactment of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. The purpose of this law is to assure the rights of handicapped children by providing educational programs designed to meet each child's individual needs. The United States Office of Education has summarized the provisions of the law as follows:

(a) to assure that all handicapped children have available to them a free appropriate public education,
(b) to assure that the rights of handicapped children and their parents are protected,
(c) to assist states and localities to provide for the education of handicapped children, and
(d) to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate such children (Federal Register, 1977).

Public Law 94-142 also protects children's rights by requiring that assessment and evaluation materials be culturally or racially nonbiased and that assessment be administered in the child's language or mode of communication.

In the initial years of P.L. 94-142 implementation, much attention was given to assuring the rights of handicapped children through "search and serve" efforts, informing handicapped children and their parents of their rights and providing for individualized education programs (IEP's). In recent years, much attention



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has been focused on the protection of children's rights through nonbiased assessment of their cognitive and academic abilities. This added attention was preceded by several state court cases, which including Diana v. the State Board of Education (37 RFP [N.D. Cal., January 7, 1970]), and Larry P. v. Wilson Riles, Superintendent for Public Instruction for the State of California (343 F. Supp. 1306 [N.D. Cal., 1972]). These two landmark cases resulted in the decision that children could not be placed in classes for the mentally retarded on the basis of assessments which did not account for the linguistic or cultural differences of the child.

In 1982, California enacted Senate Bill 1345. Provisions in this law require that tests and other assessment materials be administered in the pupil's primary language. Another provision of the law states that the individualized education program must include linguistically appropriate goals, objectives, programs, and services for individuals whose primary language is other than English (Senate Bill, 1982).

Public Law 94-142 mandates that all handicapped children be provided a "free and appropriate" education. In addition, Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits handicapped children from being excluded from programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. The stipulations in these two pieces of legislation constitute the legal basis upon which handicapped children with bilingual needs receive services. Bergin (1980) has emphasized that LEP children are not necessarily handicapped. Bilingual programs required to meet their needs are not considered special education programs. Yet LEP children may also have handicaps and therefore be entitled to both bilingual and special education services.

## LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS

Understanding how children learn is important in planning instructional materials since children's learning styles will dictate how they approach tasks. Children come to school with preferred learning styles, and those learning styles may be culture-related. Identification of culture-related learning styles provides a basis for developing curriculum materials which meet the needs of LEP exceptional children.

The process by which an individual absorbs and retains new information is called cognitive style. Two types of cognitive style identified in the literature are analytical and global. The analytical learner approaches a task in a sequential, step-by-step continuum. The global learner uses relational strategies in order to understand new information. Their counterparts in perceptual style are field-independence and field-dependence. The field-independent learner is able to understand stimuli internally, while the field-dependent learner must rely on external cues to understand stimuli.

Chiu (1972) found evidence that Chinese children learn globally and exhibit field-dependent perception, while American children tend to be more analytical in their thinking and tend to have field-independent perception. This information should be applied when working with Chinese children since teaching children according to their cognitive and perceptual style has been found to be more effective (Carbo, 1983; Dunn, 1983; Henderson, 1980).

Learning modalities are equally important to children's learning styles. Learning modality refers to the sensory modes or channels by which individuals take in information: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Our experience suggests that Chinese children prefer the visual mode.

The demands of solving Western-oriented learning situations will develop the auditory and kinesthetic skills of nonhandicapped LEP Chinese students. However, children with learning disabilities have difficulty in developing their other modalities and therefore experience academic failure when teaching materials are not directed toward the visual mode.

Research supports the notion that curriculum and teaching materials need to be matched to the learning style and modality of the learners (Carbo, 1983; Dunn, 1983; Henderson, 1980). Traditional American educational practices have been directed toward analytical, field-independent, multisensory learners. Teaching methods planned for these children reflect their ability to synthesize information in an analytical manner and to draw from visual and auditory stimuli. In contrast, Chinese learners are less able to learn through these methods. Almanza and Mosley (1980) reported that such reading skills as word recognition, word meaning, and comprehension had been found to be directly correlated with field-independence. It follows that the Chinese learner who is field-dependent will experience more difficulty with these reading skills. Thus, there appears to be a need to develop curriculum materials which are sensitive to the learning characteristics of the LEP exceptional Chinese student.

## LINGUISTIC IDENTIFICATION

Although there are many dialects of Chinese which dirfer in phonology, syntax, and vocabulary, they share many important characteristics, which justifies classifying them into one group.

The Chinese and English languages show many differences in both written and spoken forms. Written Chinese in nonalphabetic; it is ideographic, consisting of strokes and lines which form a character representing one phonogram. Spoken Chinese is tonal. The number of tones depends on which of the various Chinese dialects is being spoken (e.g., Mandarin has four tones; Cantonese has as many as nine). A change in tone can alter the meaning of a character or phonogram.

Another area of difference between Chinese and English is grammar. There is no verb conjugation in Chinese. Hence, there are no verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, number agreement, and so forth. Other grammatical differences include the lack of prepositions and the designation of singular/plural nouns and masuline/feminine genders (Wong, et al., 1980).

There are critical phonological differences between Cantonese and English. Cantonese has a simple consonant system, but a complicated vowel system (Iwataki, et al., 1975). Many consonant sounds which exist in English are not present in Cantonese. There are 22 initial and 24 final consonant sounds in English, while Cantonese has 12 initial and 8 final consonant sounds. There are no consonant clusters in Cantonese. In addition, spoken Chinese differs radically from written Chinese. An individual who has learned only to speak Cantonese will not understand written Cantonese, and vice versa.

These basic linguistic differences must be considered when planning curriculum materials for LEP exceptional Chinese students (e.g., phonics and spelling). Because many English sounds are nonexistant in Chinese, Chinese speakers may tend to substitute for them sounds of their own phonology, leading to difficulty in learning phonics skills. Likewise, the grammatical differences of the two languages complicate children's efforts to learn spelling and language skills.

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

A final area of consideration when developing curriculum materials for LEP exceptional Chinese children is culture. Professionals working with LEP exceptional children agree that including culturally relevant materials into educational programs has a positive effect on achievement (Almanza & Mosley, 1980; Bland, Sabatino, Sedlack, & Sternberg, 1979; Chinn, 1979; Baca & Lane, 1974; Henderson, 1980; Hilliard, 1980). Because of the paucity of such materials for handicapped students (Bland, Sabatino, Sedlack, & Sternberg, 1979), special educators have looked to bilingual/bicultural education for assistance.

Bilingual/bicultural educators have much to draw from when investigating cultural materials appropriate for Chinese students. The early Chinese immigrants brought with them a heritage rich in history, tradition, and culture. Because of the past and present tendency for the Chinese to remain in a concentrated area such as Chinatown, many have retained their heritage. And because of the continual emigration of Chinese from their homeland, their acculturation has been a slow process, with much of their traditional Chinese culture remaining intact. Thus, bilingual/bicultural instructional programs emphasize history, tradition, and culture. However, children with learning handicaps may have difficulty absorbing abstract references to history and tradition due to differences in learning style. Field-dependent, visually oriented learners need a concrete image of what is to be learned. They are able to gather only from their immediate environment. This implies the need for curriculum materials which are relevant to the contemporary culture. Educators planning curriculum materials must be sensitive to the home, school, and community environment of the LEP exceptional Chinese student.

## SUMMARY

As educators working with LEP exceptional Chinese children, we must address the need for appropriate curricula to meet the needs of our students. The literature has indicated a paucity of such materials specifically designed for these children. Using curricula designed for bilingual students or curricula designed for handicapped students does not appear appropriate for students with both bilingual and exceptional needs. All indications point to the need to develop new curricula for these students.

In order to modify or develop curriculum materials for LEP exceptional Chinese students, special education personnel must have an understanding of the learning, linguistic, and cultural identification of this population. Because of the lack of empirical data on the characteristics of these children, special educators working with these youngsters need to be especially alert to their

needs. It is hoped that the foregoing discussion of history, litigation, demographics, culture, language, and learning style will provide some understanding of the characteristics of LEP exceptional Chinese students and assist educators in developing culturally relevant instructional materials for these children.

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